

테리판

파그마의 후예

MAYA&MARU GAME FANTASY STORY

박새날 게임 판타지 장편소설



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Overgeared

– 템빨 –

- Part 1 -

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– SYNOPSIS –

Shin Youngwoo has had an unfortunate life and is now stuck carrying bricks on construction sites. He even had to do labor in the VR game, Satisfy!

However, luck would soon enter his hapless life. His character, 'Grid', would discover the Northern End Cave for a quest, and in that place, he would find 'Pagma's Rare Book' and become a legendary class player...

GLOSSARY OF COMMON KOREAN TERMS

This is a page containing a list of common korean honourifics and terms that might show up, so I won't have to give an explanation for them.

- Hyung: used by males to refer to an older male. It can be their actual older brother or someone they are close to.
- Hyungnim: more respectful way of saying Hyung.
- Oppa: used by females to refer to an older male.
- Unni: used by females to refer to an older female.
- Noona: used by males to refer to an older female.
- Noonim: more respectful way of saying Noona.
- Ahjussi: a term used for middle-aged men.
- Ajumma: a term used for middle-aged women.
- Orabeoni: more respectful way for females to refer to older males. More commonly used in the older days.
- Abamama: term used by princes and princesses to refer to their father, the king. More commonly used in the older days.
- Omamama: term used by princes and princesses to refer to their mother, the queen. More commonly used in the older days.
- nim: a title of respect. It is usually attached after an occupation.
- ssi: a title of respect. It is usually attached after actual names.
- Sunbae: used to refer to someone older than you who usually goes to the same school or works in the same place as you.
- Hoobae: used to refer to someone younger than you who usually goes to the same school or works in the same place as you.
- Chaebol: Type of family run business conglomerate. Members of that family are often called chaebols.

TRANSLATOR NOTE

TL Note: Hey everyone,

This is my new novel called Overgeared. The name is basically a Korean gaming slang term used to put down users who rely on items for strength instead of skill. It's hard to find an English equivalent to this term, especially when used in many different situations and contexts throughout the novel. I have decided to go with Overgeared for the title and for when it is used as a noun, etc. a guild name. However, I will go with 'item effect', the most accurate meaning, for when it is used in a sentence.

This is a vrmmorpg novel and while it has some of the obvious stereotypes and unrealistic parts, it also does some things differently. People might get annoyed with the mc's character at first, but he does get a lot of character development. In fact, some of the fun of reading the novel is seeing the MC's character grow. I think that people who are fans of VR novels like Legendary Moonlight Sculptor and Rebirth of the Thief will enjoy this novel.

Thanks, Rainbow Turtle.

Brief overview that I translated from a Korean site:

The basis of this novel is a virtual reality game called Satisfy, developed by the world's top genius scientist Lim Cheolho and world-class scientists.

The main character is timid, flaky, selfish, cares about money and easily feels jealous of others. Because the author set up the character in this way, the story was difficult for the readers to read.

But as the main character encounters various people and geniuses, he internally matures and his personality changes. If the main character is described as cancerous early on, at present he can be called a mature adult. However, those who don't read beyond the early parts of the 5th volume (~ chapter 90) find it hard to believe.

The basic settings and story line are similar to other VR novels, but the praiseworthy thing is the content development. The early parts aren't much different from rival

novels, but the novel rating has exceeded the market average in recent years due to the writer's growth.

Like other novels, it contains a munchkin element, but it is different from typical munchkins. In the early stages, the game progresses with the main character using is class of a legendary blacksmith. The main character expands the game content and the level of the existing users dramatically increase. Hidden talents, new players in the official rankings, classes that could break the balance, all of this makes the main character's one-man show impossible. The main character grows internally and externally while competing with others.

In fact, if you compare the simple and ignorant battle method in the beginning to his abilities in the present time, it is possible to feel such a sense of distance that he doesn't seem like the same character.

As for the evaluation of the work, the criticism was severe in the beginning, but the popularity increased rapidly after that. As described above, the improvement in the author's writing and the growth of the main character led to rapid changes in the comments. However, the main character's selfish and frustrating behaviour caused many readers to stop reading in the beginning. For the readers who have gone beyond the beginning, it is a tragedy that seems really pitiful.

Currently, its popularity is increasing and a webtoon was recently released. However, there are many criticisms of the webtoon due to the various changes made. For those curious about the webtoon, [here is the link to the raws](#), although only the first 3 chapters are free.

PROLOGUE

“Five minutes left!”

Eight of the top-ranked players were gathered in one place on the 4th floor of Cork Island’s dungeon. The highest-ranked among them was Peak Sword, who was 16th on the overall unified rankings. Behind them were 200 elite members of the Silver Knights Guild.

It was a spectacular sight of a gathering of users with the combined power to capture a small fortress. But tension and anxiety filled everyone’s faces.

“Four minutes left!”

As time counted down, the nervousness of the guild members reached the peak. They were restlessly shaking their legs and biting their nails. Peak Sword gazed around with dark eyes, the hands holding his sword soaked with sweat.

‘I can’t calm down.’

Cork Island’s dungeon was fully controlled by the Silver Knights Guild, and the boss monster, Hell Gao, appeared on the 4th floor every two weeks. However, Hell Gao was stronger than expected and had a variety of patterns, so they had been unable to succeed in any of their five attempts so far.

Peak Sword and the elites of the Silver Knights strengthened their items with money during the last month, all with the intention of succeeding next time. They were definitely stronger after all the investments, but those who knew Hell Gao’s power couldn’t feel any confidence.

“Three minutes left!”

After three minutes, Hell Gao would appear and this place would turn into a sea of fire. Some of them would even die from just the flames.

“Two minutes left!”

A wave heat started to slowly permeate throughout the room.

‘Shit.’

Peak Sword wanted to encourage everyone, but he was afraid. He was clearly reminded of the overwhelming appearance of Hell Gao, the staff-wielding boss monster enshrouded in flames.

‘Are we still lacking the power to defeat him?’

It might be different if the power of the top 10 rankers were added, but he couldn’t help thinking that this expedition would fail with their current strength. However, the guild’s best ranker couldn’t show his weakness, so Peak Sword endured it.

‘Do it. We can do it. We are strong!’

Peak Sword steadied his heart and took various buffing potions, with the others following him. It was at that moment.

“One minute left...eh? Intruder! There is an intruder!!”

“What?”

All of the guild members’ eyes headed towards the entrance. A young man had entered. It was unusual because he was covered by a cloak, with no armor or weapons visible.

‘Did he break through the defensive troops downstairs?’

Was it a highly trained assassin? No, an assassin wouldn’t openly reveal their presence in a place like this. Peak Sword pondered on the name above the head of the black-haired youth. However, no matter how much he looked through his memory, it was an unfamiliar name.

‘He isn’t a ranker?’

Peak Sword glanced at his companions, but they all shook their heads.

‘A non-ranker coming all the way here. Pathetic.’

Peak Sword came to this conclusion and warned the youth with a frown,

“This is an area controlled by the Silver Knights Guild. I don’t know how you managed to reach this point, but if you don’t want to die, go back.”

“My stealth suddenly disappeared. Was it because I was detected by Hell Gao?”

The young man ignored Peak Sword’s warning and threw off his cloak as he talked to himself.

“Ohh!”

There were exclamations from every direction. The appearance of armor rapidly being equipped on the body of the youth was quite cool. Despite being made of metal, it seemed to be custom fit for the wearer, and its smooth surface was so reflective it was like a mirror. It was an elegant blend of red, black and gold. The particularly unique point was the one-meter long tail that stretched from the vicinity of the tail bone. It was sharp like a blade, and amazingly moving on its own.

“W-What, that armor?”

“It’s terrific... Unique grade?”

It was the first time they had seen such armor, so the guild members struggled to hide their interest.

Peak Sword raised his voice, “That isn’t important right now! Why aren’t you throwing him out right now?”

Hell Gao would soon appear and then nobody would be able to escape from the dungeon. They had to deal with the outsider before that. The moment that the guild members interested in the armor tried to carry out Peak Sword’s order,

Roaaaaaar!!!

[Hell Gao, the owner of Hellfire, has appeared.]

[Hell Gao’s roar has applied fear, chaos, and debilitating effects.]

[Hell Gao’s fire reduces heat resistance by 50%.]

[Fire pillars have risen to cover you.]

“Kuack!”

“Hiiik!”

Due to the silent flames that surrounded the whole body, half of the guild members either fell into a dying state or burned to the point where they couldn't even be recognized. Barely half of the people standing were able to hang on.

Peak Sword was surprised at the notification window that popped up.

‘I raised my fire resistance to 86%, but to still receive this degree of damage...!’

They would fail again. As Peak Sword was feeling despair, he suddenly doubted his eyes. The unknown young man. While the others were surrounded by flames, he alone was moving forward, moving freely like he wasn't affected.

“H-How...heok?”

Peak Sword fell silent as he witnessed a ridiculous scene. As Hell Gao ran amok and slaughtered the guild members, the young man pulled out a pickaxe, headed to the wall... and started swinging the pickaxe?

Kaaang! Kaaang!

The young man swung it with good form and complained as he wiped off the sweat,

“Ugh, hot! Isn't the labor getting worse? Why does the mineral only appear when the boss mob is present? Based on this, I might have to visit a dragon's lair with my pickaxe!”

At that moment, a hot wind emerged from the staff that Hell Gao waved and hit the young man. Peak Sword expected the young man to receive huge damage and collapse. But unbelievably, the young man only suffered minor injuries.

“Excuse me, Mister.” The youth stopped his pickaxe for the first time and turned his attention to Peak Sword. He said with an irate expression, “Why are you just standing there blankly? It's hot now, but it will only just get hotter.”

What was he seeing now? Peak Sword belatedly regained his spirit and asked, “How can you be fine?”

The young man replied like it was obvious, “It’s the item effect.”

Chaaeng! Chaeng!

The tail on the young man’s armor moved by itself and fought against Hell Gao’s staff. Peak Sword couldn’t close his mouth as he gaped at the unbelievable sight.

CHAPTER 1

After entering the ‘Northern End Cave’ at the end of a three months journey, I was able to witness the overwhelming sight of all types of battle gear piled up like a mountain.

“Wow, what is this?”

The names of the brilliant battle gear were in a colorful mix of green, yellow, and purple. If I took only a few of these, I would become a rich man! I wanted to take all the battle gear, but it was impossible.

[This item can’t be obtained.]

“How stingy and dirty.”

Items that couldn’t be acquired despite them being right in front of me! When I put it in my bag, it would return to its original spot like a mirage. This situation was like that of a pie in the sky, or a woman already being married. No, a married woman was still different from a pie in the sky, as one could still obtain a married woman if one tried enough.

In the end, I could only stare at the items with longing and regret.

‘Indeed... If a user could obtain all of these, Satisfy’s economic balance might crumble. Unfortunately, I understand.’

I didn’t come here for the battle gear in the first place. I soothed my mind and turned my attention away from the pile of battle gear. There was an old book placed on a shiny gold table.

“Finally...”

All the hardships I experienced while coming here passed through my mind. Laughter emerged as my nose became runny and tears dripped down. Thank goodness I had patience and tenacity, otherwise, I would’ve quit the game because of the terrible

difficulty of the quest. I felt great pride at the thought of clearing this quest.

“Kukuk...puhahahat!! I finally found it!! Oh, yehhhhhh!”

A damn S-grade quest that was impossible to give up! Incidentally, how many deaths have I experienced before on this solo quest? How many items were destroyed due to no durability?!

A human blacksmith who transcended the skills of a dwarf, Pagma achieved the culmination of god-like techniques!

The face of Earl Ashur, who made me visit one of the Eternal Kingdom’s five forbidden zones, popped into my head.

“If I bring this to him, I can get the Sun Sword? Once I get it, no one can match me for the rest of my life, you bastards! I will make you pay for hitting me!”

Pleasure surged like a tide as I picked up the book.

[You have acquired the legendary craftsman’s rare book!]

[It isn’t in a proper state. You can check the details using the Eye of Pallalian.]

[Do you want to use the Eye of Pallalian?]

“Eye of Pallalian? A high-end appraisal item is needed to check the item?”

Eye of Pallalian was the most expensive among the existing appraisal items. Six months ago, I had bought it just in case I got a jackpot, but sadly, I couldn’t use it and it was left in my inventory.

“I don’t want to miss a golden opportunity...”

I put the appraisal on hold and examined the golden table. I wondered if there was a way to take this gold away, but it wouldn’t budge. Kicking, pulling and even biting it was useless. It was an item like the battle gear that users couldn’t own.

“Ah, I really can’t salvage anything because of this effective system. The price of my

three months of work is very high.”

I gazed at the book in my hand.

‘I have to give Ashur the item so do I really need to use an expensive item to appraise it?’

I struggled for a moment before pulling out the Eye of Pallalian. It was natural to wonder about the source of my three months suffering.

“Appraisal.”

[Pagma’s Rare Book]

Rating: Legendary

This is a book that contains the techniques of Pagma, the blacksmith who transcended human limits. The person who opens the book can become a legendary blacksmith.

Effects: Become Pagma’s descendant.

Conditions: None.

* The level and stats will change when used.

[A legendary item has been found!]

[Reputation will rise by 500 across the continent.]

My body started trembling.

“Whoa...jackpot...”

It was a legendary item! My reputation rose by 500 across the continent just because I discovered it! It was an amazing harvest, given that it was difficult to raise reputation by 100 just in one city.

‘Reputation is reputation, but...’

I wondered if I had seen it wrongly and read the item description again. However, there was no change in the contents.

“Jack~~pot!!”

I wasn’t hallucinating. I was extremely excited and could hear my heart beating wildly. I thought it was just a skill book but it was actually for a class change? Furthermore, it was legendary grade! This meant it was the strongest class in the world!

“Moreover, there is no condition to use...”

Tears flowed down from my eyes. During the past year, I had to pay the interest on my loan, my Satisfy account, and I also took a leave of absence from school. My friends left me one by one, the alumni of my school laughed at me, people thought I was lazy...

My original plan was to sell the items I gained during the game and turn it into cash so that I could pay off my loan, my account, and my tuition. However, Satisfy wasn’t such a fair world. It was hard to earn money and I could barely obtain equipment for myself, let alone ones I could sell.

But now it was different. A thrill went through my body as I shivered.

“It is over... I can say farewell to this nightmarish life!”

A legendary class change item! If I register it as an auction item on the item trading site, it was clear that the transaction price would be worth tens of millions of won.

No, it was an item that gave the best class among two billion users, so would it only be worth tens of millions of won? I could be sure that it was worth at least hundreds of millions of won. I might be able to get my hands on an astronomical amount that I never imagined!

“Puhahahahat!! Mother! Father! This freeloader finally made it! Now it’s time to leave the game and forget about finding employment! My parents can quit feeling ashamed of their son in front of the neighbors! Sehee! Oppa finally did it! Now you don’t have to be embarrassed every time you meet me on the street! When my friends want to come and play at my house, I don’t have to refuse and make all sorts of excuses! And my friends! Alumni! They can’t ignore me anymore as a pathetic game loser! I will

become a success with a game! I have taken a few steps ahead of you guys in the society! Puhahahat!!”

I paid 10 million won to purchase a capsule, and my loan interest rose by hundreds of thousands of won every month.

‘Ahyoung is still pretty...’

I imagined attending my high school alumni meeting for the first time in two years in a foreign car. The successful alumni wouldn’t be able to ignore me anymore. Then I blushed as the face of my first love, Ahyoung, came to mind.

“Okay, go and sell it!”

Quest? I didn’t care about that right now. Obviously, while the reward was a weapon that belonged to the epic rating, it was nothing in comparison to the price of this book. My affinity with Earl Ashur would fall and would probably end up with me not receiving any more quests from him. But there was no reason to be afraid in front of hundreds of millions of won.

“Logout!”

I confidently exclaimed. Then a notification window flashed in front of my eyes.

[You can’t log out of the game here.]

[Earl Ashur has appeared.]

“.....?”

Dozens of knights jumped into the cave as I was struggling to understand. Then the familiar Earl Ashur appeared. I panicked as he found me and his face distorted.

“Foolish traveler, you all have the same greed.”

[The quest ‘Earl Ashur’s Secret Request’ (S) has changed to ‘Earl Ashur’s Anger’ (SS).]

[Earl Ashur's Anger]

Difficulty Level: SS

Earl Ashur chose you due to your average abilities, your stupidity and because you are easy to exploit. He entrusted you with the task of finding Pagma's rare book that he wasn't even sure existed.

He put a watcher on you and came urgently as soon as he heard that you entered the 'Northern End Cave'. Earl Ashur has witnessed you become blinded by greed over Pagma's rare book and has no intention of forgiving you. He intends to kill you and take away Pagma's rare book.

* Affinity with Earl Ashur has fallen by 100.

* Due to your actions, all of the fame you have built in Patrian has disappeared and you have now become infamous. The affinity of Patrian's residents has fallen by 40. They will look at you and call you a thief.

Quest Clear Conditions: The deaths of Earl Ashur and his escort knights.

Clear Reward: Obtain the title 'Noble Killer.'

* Noble Killer: Intelligence -50.

All nobles in the kingdom will despise and oppress you. Your jobs will be limited. The affinity of some commoners and royalty will rise.

Quest Failure: Level -2.

You will no longer be able to enter Patrian.

Any Patrian soldiers will kill you on sight.]

Patrian was the starter city where I first created my character. I built up a considerable amount of reputation while completing quests in Patrian from level 1 to the present, and my affinity with the residents was at its maximum.

All merchants gave me a 20% discount when buying goods, and the goods I sold were purchased at 15% above their value. There were residents who gave me hidden quests

when I approached them. But all these achievements automatically flew away the moment this quest updated.

“...Ah, I. This is shit.”

A curse naturally emerged.

“Earl Ashur... no, you bastard! This goddamn bastard forced me onto a quest where I wasn’t sure if I could find the item or not!! If Pagma’s rare book was something that didn’t exist, I would’ve struggled for months in vain! You are the one who lied in the first place, yet you want to make me notorious in Patrian? Filthy jerk!”

As their master was cursed at, the hot-headed knights immediately pulled out their swords. Earl Ashur restrained them and spoke coldly to me, “You had already decided to betray me before you knew you were deceived. Even so, you are still acting so proudly.”

“Is it greedy to want a reasonable reward after the hardships of my journey? My betrayal wasn’t certain!”

He sneered at my words.

“Didn’t I already promise to give you a reward in return? We entered into a contract and you have trespassed on my good faith out of greed.”

This wasn’t something that I could handle with words. As I fell mute, Earl Ashur’s momentum increased as he continued to chatter,

“You are truly a poor man. The more I watched, the more I could feel it. But there are times when you can do extraordinary things, as I honestly hadn’t expected you to find this cave that had disappeared from history. I will punish you for your ignorance, but as reward for your patience, I will kill you as painlessly as possible.”

CHAPTER 2

‘This bastard!’

I wanted to stab my sword in Ashur’s mouth right now, but it was an impossible task. The man’s level was 300 and was also a great magician who completed his third class change. His escort knights had an average of level 180.

On the other hand, I was only at level 73 and didn’t even have a chance against the youngest knight who was serving as a bread shuttle. (Bread shuttle – Usually used at school, where one student is picked on and/or bullied to do the errands for people who are higher on the social ladder than the shuttles are.)

But look at the quest clear conditions. I had to kill them.

Plus! Even if I cleared the quest, wasn’t the quest compensation garbage?

‘My intelligence will be minus 50? Fuck, right now I have 30 intelligence, so won’t I be an idiot if I’m at minus 50? And all of the kingdom’s nobles would hate me? So where was my exit route?? Why is there a quest like this? Ahhh!!’

There was only one choice. Just die. I would drop two levels, but I couldn’t succeed anyway. Besides, what was the point of succeeding with such a nasty quest?

“Hu...”

I felt resigned. The pressure from the knights wasn’t a joke.

‘This means I would’ve lost eight levels just from this quest... Ashur... One day, I will become high level and take revenge. Definitely.’

I stared at Ashur and vowed revenge, then closed my eyes at the menacing swords in the knights’ hands. Then suddenly, I remembered Pagma’s book in my hand.

‘Wait, what about this?’

Would it remain in my inventory after I died if I put it in there before my death? This wasn’t a general quest item, so I couldn’t be assured of the situation.

What was Ashur's purpose in the first place? Pagma's rare book. The reason he wanted to kill me was to take it away. In order for the story to go smoothly, if he killed me, it was likely that Pagma's book would disappear from my inventory and fall into his hands.

"Shit!"

If I was going to lose Pagma's book anyway, I might as well use it instead of selling! A new option emerged. I could use Pagma's rare book.

However, I hesitated. I hated production-related classes. Wasn't the point of a game to enjoy the thrill of battle? However, if I became a blacksmith, I would have to sweat as I hammered at iron in front of a fire. It might be necessary to carry pickaxes while searching for mines to collect the necessary materials.

It was indeed...

'La. bor.'

At that moment, a chill went down my spine. I was doing brickwork and shovel work at construction sites in real life, and now I needed to do labor in a game as well! Just imagining it made me feel terribly dizzy.

"Kuock..."

I wanted to remain as a warrior; it was my dream to swing my sword at enemies and someday become an army general. But now it was time to give up on that dream. An item worth hundreds of millions of won would be taken away by an NPC! By that bastard Ashur!

"It's better to use it than to lose it to him!"

I tearfully opened Pagma's book. The shocked Ashur hurriedly stretched out a hand and chanted a spell.

"It's too late, you jerk."

I ridiculed him before falling silent as I checked the notification windows appearing one by one.

[You have become Pagma's descendant.]

[Your level has dropped.]

[You are now level 1.]

[All skills and stats have been reset.]

“.....?”

I couldn't believe my eyes. Weren't class changes supposed to help you get stronger by strengthening your existing level, stats, and skills? Therefore, I couldn't understand why my level, stats and skills were reset instead of maintained.

“What is this?”

As I was confused by the unknown situation, new notification windows emerged.

[Dexterity stat has opened.]

[Blacksmith's Craftsmanship skill has been created.]

[Blacksmith's Craftsmanship skill has been mastered.]

[Blacksmith's Appraisal skill has been created.]

[Blacksmith's Appraisal skill has been mastered.]

[Blacksmith's Patience has been created.]

[Blacksmith's Patience has been mastered.]

[Blacksmith's Disassembly skill has been created.]

[Blacksmith's Disassembly skill has been mastered.]

[Blacksmith's Repair skill has been created.]

[Blacksmith's Repair skill has been mastered.]

[All blacksmith skills have been mastered to the level of the Pinnacle and the skills

of the legendary blacksmith have been opened.]

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship skill has been created.]

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Discernment skill has been created.]

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Appraisal skill has been created.]

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Patience skill has been created.]

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Repair skill has been created.]

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Disassembly skill has been created.]

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Breath skill has been created.]

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Blessing skill has been created.]

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Creation skill has been created.]

[Title, 'One who Became a Legend', has been acquired.]

[Composure stat has opened.]

[Indomitable stat has opened.]

[Dignity stat has opened.]

[Insight stat has opened.]

In the case of dexterity, it was a basic stat possessed by all users with a production-related class. However, the Composure, Indomitable, Dignity, and Insight stats were all unfamiliar. Was this a good thing?

"Not good!"

I was desperate. There were 15 passive skills and 22 active skills that I learned as a warrior. However, I completely lost all my abilities as a warrior. Due to the effect of the class change, I had completely become a laborer.

Furthermore, I was level one. The levels that I barely built up over the past year had been completely reset and I needed to start over? I had to restart the damn level-up grind from the beginning?!

“Why is there a quest like this? Fuc*!@....~#@....\$@....^%\$!!”

I combined several Korean characters together as a knight’s sword rapidly headed towards me.

[You have been hit by a blow!]

[You have died.]

The level 1’s low stamina dropped to 0 with a single hit from a level 180 knight.

[Quest failed!]

[You will no longer be able to enter Patrian.]

[Any Patrian soldiers will kill you on sight.]

[Your level has dropped by 2.]

[You are now level -1.]

[There is no registered residence. Do you want to resurrect at the nearest temple?]

“.....?”

I saw my level and lost it.

“Negative? My level is negative??”

I was certain that I had been cursed by the gods for some fault in a previous life. I barely got here after three months of hardship only to get this result? I didn’t want to play the game. I chose to log out instead of resurrecting.

Once I quit the game, I immediately connected to the Internet and searched through all of the Satisfy related forums in Korea to look for information about a negative level. But I couldn’t get any information so I wrote my question directly on the forum.

Title: I am currently level -1.

Contents: I have been doing a quest for three months and received a legendary old book. However, I failed and my level strangely dropped to -1. Why??? Has this ever happened before???????

I pressed the OK button to post and completely emerged from the capsule. A quick glance in the mirror revealed someone who looked like an emaciated patient with an incurable disease. It was the aftermath of not sleeping for three months while doing the quest. And the only thing I received in return was a loss of hundreds of millions of won and a minus level.

“My three months of work have gone flying away... Three months of hard work. Hahaha...”

I could’ve gone and taken some labor jobs, but I ended up shoveling air. No, it was a loss of time and level. I lost energy and flopped to the ground. I was sad, empty, grumpy, and resentful. All types of negative emotions were pouring in, giving me a tremendous sense of helplessness. If I were weaker person, I was sure that I would’ve committed suicide.

“...I need to take a shit.”

I had been connected to the game for a long time, so I headed to the bathroom after receiving a physiological signal. It was three in the morning. All my family members were sleeping. If I woke up my parents then they might curse at me.

I stealthily crossed the living room, quietly did my business in the bathroom, washed up, moved back to the kitchen, and took out a side dish from the fridge. I barely managed to find a spoon in the darkness and returned to my room with a bowl of rice.

“Oh, it’s sausage fried rice.”

The taste of a meat processed product! As I ate delicious food and filled up my stomach, I relaxed and could think soberly.

“How did my level become minus?”

I thought about it before sitting in the capsule to check the question I posted on the Internet.

“What?”

In the meantime, the number of views on my posts had gone over 10,000. The number of comments was more than 2,000!

“D-Don’t tell me?”

I couldn’t find the information, but was the minus level actually famous among users, and the users were excited because it gave tremendous benefits? My dream was destroyed when I checked the comments.

IkSl ** ‘s answer: If there is a minus level, a ghost will appear before me at night.

Eksk ** s answer: Wow ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ I am level -5 ^.^ We are low-level comrades.

Tutu ** ‘s answer: Did you find a legendary book as well? ㄹㄹ Do you have an attention sickness?

cm3s **’s answer: He should be brought to a mental hospital. Take this post down.

7r14 ** s answer: Legendary book... minus level... these days ㄷㄷ ㅇ really, some people...

jk12 **-1’s answer: Wouldn’t -1 be last place in the rankings ㄹㄹㄹㄹ I would quit the game ㄹ

Kkks ** ‘s answer: Something this unique that hasn’t appeared yet, what nonsense.

Qkr8 ** s answer: Is it excessive drinking?

Gjte ** s answer: Wow, minus level... I pay homage to your imagination. You should be a fiction writer. ㄷ ㄷ

“.....”

There were 2,000 comments like these. I felt like an idiot.

‘It seems that information about minus level hasn’t been revealed at all... am I the first person?’

Satisfy’s system was configured to allow users to discover and develop themselves. There was no such thing as a customer service center like in other more traditional online games. Satisfy’s two billion users had been developing the world during the past year by pioneering and exchanging information on their own.

But in such a vast world, there was a lot of information that hadn’t been revealed, such as the minus level that I was experiencing now.

Swaaah.

It was raining outside the window. According to the weather forecast, it was going to rain all day. It wasn’t easy to get a labor job if he went out looking today. I ate the last of the rice and logged into the game again.

CHAPTER 3

Lim Cheolho was the core of the team of 33 scientists who built the virtual reality system and was the person who led the development of Satisfy by establishing the S.A Group.

He had many titles: the one with the knowledge of a god, the creator of the virtual reality system, the person who changed the world, the father of Satisfy, the wealthiest person in the nation, one of the most influential figures in the world, a person who received requests for naturalization dozens of times a year from all over the world, the pride of South Korea, etc.

His countless titles meant that he received the spotlight every time he attended international events, and his influence transcended the American president, making him the world's envy.

In fact, his life wasn't as flashy as discussed in the media. He was the head of Satisfy's development team, as well as head of the S.A Group, so he slept less than four hours a day on average. But was he unhappy? No, it was something he wanted for himself. Lim Cheolho was proud and enthusiastic about Satisfy, which had captured the hearts of two billion people.

"Umm."

Lim Cheolho was woken up by the sound of his phone ringing. He checked the time and saw that it was 2:50 a.m. It had only been 20 minutes since he went to sleep. The accumulated fatigue from a month's worth of late nights crushed Lim Cheolho's thinking ability.

His voice was rather sharp as he spoke into the phone, "What is going on? What?"

An urgent voice was heard over the phone. Lim Cheolho immediately woke up. "I'm going immediately! Be prepared to give me the report as soon as I arrive!"

Lim Cheolho got dressed and entered the elevator, heading to the underground floor of his house. In the underground parking lot, limited edition cars from expensive brands were parked in order by type. He climbed into a sports car with the butterfly style doors and drove to the company at full speed.

“What happened?”

Satisfy’s Operations Office.

Lim Cheolho ran into it and asked without recovering his breathing. Yoon Nahee, the head of the operations team, bowed to Lim Cheolho and adjusted her orange horn-rimmed glasses.

“It happened five minutes ago.”

“How interesting!”

The excited Lim Cheolho sat down. He turned his gaze to the huge monitor on the wall and the stopped video started playing. The main character of the video was a level 73 warrior. An Asian youth found a cave at the northern end of an island, held Pagma’s rare book, and used it.

The staff handed two documents to Lim Cheolho as he watched the video. Lim Cheolho read it and rubbed his chin.

“In reality, as well as in Satisfy, he is a normal person with no outstanding traits. After being exposed to Satisfy, he suffered from a lack of self-control, resulting in the lowest level of life. How did this person find the cave at the north end that was concealed by a complex algorithm? Does he have an exploration talent that he doesn’t know about?”

According to the analysis from the development team’s ‘Morpheus’ supercomputer, the North End Cave was supposed to be found by users in one year and ten months. In other words, it meant that the appearance of the legendary book, ‘Pagma’s Rare Book’, was originally supposed to be one year and ten months later.

One young man broke everyone’s expectations and hastened the timing. The number of users who did their 2nd class advancement was less than 100, and he was now the sole legendary class in the game.

Lim Cheolho was greatly interested in the user who gave him a great surprise. But Yoon Nahee didn’t think of the young man as anything special.

“It was merely a product of coincidence and obsession that he discovered the North End Cave.”

“I see.”

The young man called Shin Youngwoo, whose player name was Grid, stayed in only one city for a year and accumulated more than 8,000 reputation in that city. His intelligence stat was also less than 50.

This completed the conditions needed to receive Earl Ashur’s quest. He explored areas infested with monsters higher than level 200 for three months without giving up, even though he was less than level 80 and tasted death several times.

The most impressive thing about him was his discovery the North End Cave. He found the quest item and was blinded by greed. By choosing to log out, he met the requirements for the linked quest to possess the legendary book.

‘There are many ways to meet the activation requirements, but the most extreme one is logging out.’

Anyway, as Yoon Nahee said, this chain was the result of coincidence and a stubborn personality. However, the young man proved that coincidences overlapping several times could create a positive cloud. It also reminded him how valuable patience and effort was.

‘Luck and persistent are also great abilities.’

Yoon Nahee asked a question to Lim Cheolho, who was watching the young man on the monitor with sparkling eyes.

“How does the minus level work?”

“That is also a cloud of luck.”

“Huh?”

A scientist was talking about luck? Lim Cheolho laughed and explained,

“As you know, users below level 10 get the beginner bonus, so their experience won’t decrease even if they die. This means that they don’t suffer from the level drop phenomenon. But in fact, a hidden system exists. Level reduction due to quest failure will be enforced regardless of the beginner benefits. However, there is no way for a beginner to receive a quest that would cause a level decrease, so it was likely to remain

a hidden system forever.”

Lim Cheolho enjoyed the fragrance of the coffee that a staff member passed him and continued,

“The team predicted that if this quest followed the normal course, the one who received ‘Earl Ashur’s Secret Request’ quest would be a minimum of level 350. If the user is over level 350, they have a high chance of clearing the ‘Earl Ashur’s Anger’ quest and becoming Pagma’s Descendant. In other words, they wouldn’t be lacking in ability like that young man and wouldn’t have failed the quest. Only this young man was able to find the hidden system through this quest.”

Yoon Nahee summarized it succinctly.

Grid made an extreme choice during the quest because he was afraid of losing the hard-earned item. At this point, the penalty of falling to level 1 after becoming a legendary class was applied.

Users under level 10 wouldn’t experience a drop in experience even if they died, due to the beginner bonus. But there were no exceptions to a failed quest’s penalty. Grid was forced to lose two levels due to the quest failure, even though he was level 1, and as a result, he was now stuck at level -1.

This was why Lim Cheolho called it a cloud of luck...

“Then can a minus level gain experience in the normal way and earn stat points for every level gained?”

Lim Cheolho nodded. “Right. He is currently level -1 and will have to gain two levels to reach level 1, where he will then have 20 stat points.”

“...This means his base stats will be 20 points higher than a character of the same level.”

“That’s right. That young man received a benefit that wouldn’t have been possible if he was a player capable of clearing Earl Ashur’s quest. He is a really lucky guy.”

The expressions of the employees grew serious. Yoon Nahee asked him, “A legendary class has appeared two years sooner than expected. A legendary class is already very powerful, so if he has 20 more stat points than his level, won’t the balance be broken?”

Lim Cheolho showed her the papers listing Shin Youngwoo's information.

"This graph shows that his level was quite low in proportion to the amount of time he spent hunting. He was a foolish person who stayed in one city for a year without leaving to find adventures or a more pleasant environment. I don't think he has great talent for the game like the rankers. You don't have to worry."

"Is it really okay? In the eyes of other users, it might be enough to make him look special."

"What can we do, even if it isn't okay? We have a policy of not directly interfering in the game, so think positively. Isn't it a good thing that an ordinary user, not a ranker, obtained it? Besides, Pagma's Descendant is relatively weak in combat compared to the other legendary classes..."

Lim Cheolho, who was watching the young man on the monitor, suddenly flinched and fell silent. He shook his head at Yoon Nahee's puzzled expression.

"No, it isn't a big deal. I will be going now. You have suffered a lot from the late nights of work. I will give you a bonus soon, so please suffer a bit more."

The atmosphere of the employees became excited at the word 'bonus'. Lim Cheolho smiled and left the office.

'Why all of a sudden?'

Only Yoon Nahee was silent among the raucous staff. She felt nervous as she thought about Lim Cheolho's surprised look. On the other hand, Lim Cheolho's expression subtly changed in the elevator as he muttered Shin Youngwoo's name.



I lost my place of residence because I was expelled from Patrian. Therefore, I resurrected at a temple near my place of death. Oh and by the way, it was actually a temple for the god of darkness, Yatan.

Dark energy hung around the dark room, while robed black magicians wandered around with gloomy expressions. People were shouting and pounding their chests around an altar, but it was too creepy to watch.

Kiyaaaaak!

The sharp scream of a woman in pain came from underground.

“...Well, it is nothing compared to that notorious place.”

I had already finished my military service. If someone had been next to me, then they would've felt the general, oppressive atmosphere of a horror movie. I wasn't a female user so I felt no fear at the Yatan Temple.

“S-S-Status window.”

My voice was shaking but I tried not to let it affect me. I ignored the surroundings as much as possible and concentrated on the status window in front of me.

Name: Grid

Level: -1 (0/20)

Class: Pagma's Descendant

- * The probability of adding additional options when making items will increase.
- * The probability of item enhancement will increase.
- * All equipment items can be worn unconditionally. However, there is a penalty depending on the rating of the item.

Title: One who Became a Legend

- * Abnormal conditions don't work well on you.
- * You won't die when health is at the minimum.
- * Easily acknowledged.

Health: 14/14 Mana: 3/3

Strength: 1 Stamina: 1 Agility: 1 Intelligence: 1 Dexterity: 1

Composure: 1 Indomitable: 1 Dignity: 1 Insight: 1

Stat Points: 0

Weight: 3,035/20

* The weight limit exceeds 200%, so movement speed is reduced by 100%.

The body is heavy and cannot exert any power properly.

The probability of receiving the 'weakened' state has become really high.

A flood of emotions filled my head.

The minus level was something I couldn't understand, and the stats that didn't allow me to win a fight against even a rabbit caused anger. However, the special functions given by the title and profession overwhelmed me.

CHAPTER 4

‘The minus level isn’t a bug.’

The numbers in parentheses beside the level indicated my current experience and the amount of experience required to reach the next level. The existence of this experience figure meant that I could level up. In the worst case, I was worried that I wouldn’t be able to level up because I was bugged.

‘I’m glad it isn’t a bug...’

I still felt upset. Think about it: my level was originally over 70, but now I was lower than even new players who had just created their characters.

‘I have to endure this.’

I braced myself. It might take time, but I could raise my level again. The reason for this positive thinking was due to the qualities of my profession and title. I didn’t know anything about item creation, so I couldn’t comment on the probability of adding additional options, but it was still good to have.

‘The odds of enhancement will increase.’

In Satisfy, items could be enhanced up to +10.

However, the price of the materials needed for enhancement was expensive. In addition, the higher the enhancement number and item rating, the lower the probability of the enhancement succeeding. In addition, if the enhancement was successful, the enhancement value would be +1; however, if it failed, it would be -3. The price for items with an enhancement of +6 would rise exponentially.

‘I don’t know how much the probability has risen, but can’t I feel hope for a large amount of money?’

Both of the class characteristics that I mentioned were quite attractive. However, my bigger interest was that all items could be worn unconditionally. This was an unreasonable merit. Depending on the penalties that were applied, this attribute could disrupt the balance of the game.

'Isn't this a fraudulent class attribute?'

Most of the equipment items in Satisfy had conditions of use attached to them. If the conditions weren't met, the item couldn't be worn. For that reason, every level had strong limitations. But that didn't apply to me, due to the nature of my class.

'Really?'

I opened my inventory.

[Mamon's Greatsword]

Rating: Epic

Durability: 88/204 Attack Power: 178~301 Attack Speed: -16%

-Additional water damage will be added to all critical attacks.

This is the greatsword patronized by the guardian of Lake Pamian, Mamon. Due to the influence of the lake, this sword has the strong aura of water.

Conditions of Use: Level 65 or higher, more than 260 strength, more than 150 stamina.

Weight: 1,050

[Mengel's Plate Armor]

Rating: Rare

Durability: 51/180 Defense: 165 Movement Speed: -2%

* Strength +10

This is a work made by the blacksmith Mengel in the fortified city of Patrian. With it, the defense is improved and the weight lowered. The wearer of this work can feel Mengel's strong willpower that remained behind.

Conditions of Use: Level 60 or higher, more than 180 strength.

Weight: 1,203

My current stats didn't meet the conditions of use attached to Mamon's Greatsword or Mengel's Plate Armor. In other words, a normal person wouldn't be able to wear both items. But I was the exception.

[Due to your class characteristics, you have equipped Mamon's Greatsword.]

[A penalty is applied because the item conditions aren't met.]

[Attack power of Mamon's Greatsword will decrease by 30%. Only half of the option effects will be applied.]

[The penalties will be reduced if your understanding of Mamon's Greatsword increases.]

[Due to your class characteristics, you have equipped Mengel's Plate Armor.]

[A penalty is applied because the item conditions aren't met.]

[Defense of Mengel's Plate Armor's will decrease by 20%. Only half of the option effects will be applied.]

[The penalties will be reduced if your understanding of Mengel's Plate Armor' increases.]

"Amazing..."

Satisfy rarely had items with no usage conditions. I recalled a set of beginner items that were representative of having no conditions. I didn't remember it exactly, but in the case of the beginner's greatsword received at level 1, the attack power was 5~13 and the defense of the beginner's armor was 7.

But now I could use a weapon capable of at least 124 to 210 attack power, and 132 defense at level one.

'Won't it be surprisingly easy to recover my level?'

No matter how low my level was, I could hunt monsters around level 20 with just the attack power of Mamon's Greatsword. Thanks to Mengel's Plate Armor, I wouldn't

receive any damage from low-level monsters.

In other words, I could hunt monsters much more quickly and easily than other users at the same level, thanks to the item effect. This would be directly linked to leveling up at the speed of light.

‘The basic penalties system is that rare items have a drop of 20% in the basic abilities, while epic items have a 30% drop. Only half of the item effects are applied...’

The penalties were surprisingly small. Unique and legendary ranked items would be subjected to more penalties, but at this point, it was a sufficiently fraudulent ability.

“This is a legendary class...! But what is understanding?”

Due to my excitement, I belatedly noticed the bit about ‘understanding’ that appeared in the notification windows. Then I checked the detailed information.

[Item Understanding]

Pagma’s Descendant can understand the materials and principles of the item by using, disassembling, or repairing the equipment items. The higher the level of understanding, the more efficiently one can handle the items. If you have a 100% understanding, you can learn how to make that item.

“Ohu~”

The higher my level of understanding, the fewer penalties there would be.

“Then I will get the production method? Wow...”

Ordinary production users had to pay a large amount of money or complete hard questions to get the production methods. But I could get it for free, as long as I increased my understanding.

‘The repair skill is available and my item durability is low, so I will try and repair it later.’

Then I looked at the title attributes. In combat, the one thing players had to be most

cautious of was an abnormal status, due to its ability to often reverse the state of a battle. By the way, my title lowered the probability of being affected by abnormal statuses. It also said that I wouldn't die when my health was at the minimum, so I could be temporarily immortal.

'Easily acknowledged, does that mean my affinity with NPCs can be easily increased?'

"Puhuhut..."

I was happy. I was so happy that I couldn't stop laughing. The class and title attributes alone gave me the feeling of being ahead of other regular users. I had become special. This felt like proper compensation for my three months of suffering.

"But..."

I would've enjoyed a much greater pleasure if I could've sold the book for money.

"I missed out on the opportunity to get rid of my creditors and to drive a foreign car!"

I suddenly went from feeling good to feeling bad.

"~#@!^%*@ Ashur!!"

I pounded the floor with frustration and resentment. I poured all out types of profanities towards Ashur. Gradually, my heart was soothed. It was due to an unfamiliar stat, so I decided to check it.

[Composure]

The probability of being affected by an abnormal state is lowered. If affected by an abnormal condition, you will recover quickly.

* The higher the number, the higher the effect.

* Stat points can't be distributed to this stat.

[Indomitable]

Has a certain probability of invalidating a portion of the incoming damage. The

lower the health, the higher the probability.

* The higher the number, the higher the effect.

* Stat points can't be distributed to this stat.

[Dignity]

Can't be pushed down by others. There is a rare chance of making the enemy submit to you.

* The higher the number, the higher the effect.

* Stat points can't be distributed to this stat.

[Insight]

Discover the target. Predict risks.

* The higher the number, the higher the probability.

* Stat points can't be distributed to this stat.

Every stat had a great effect.

'By the way, how am I going to raise the number if I can't distribute points to it?'

The explanation seemed huge, but they might be stats without much practical use. The moment that I was about to open the skills window.

"Aack!"

I screamed with fear. Something had suddenly touched my back. I belatedly recalled that I was in a Yatan Temple.

"W-What!!!"

I hurriedly turned around and reflexively wielded Mamon's Greatsword. The man behind me dodged my attack and raised both hands.

“Hey, calm down. Do you want to kill a person?”

The one who spoke was a Caucasian-looking man who seemed to have an assassin type class due to his light equipment and agile body.

‘His finger poked my back.’

It might’ve be okay if it was a sword, but it was embarrassing to scream just because of a finger.

“What is it?”

The man shrugged.

“It is dreary. Shouldn’t you apologize after trying to kill a person?”

His smile looked like a smirk. I disliked this type of person.

‘This person is speaking so impolitely at our first meeting.’

Certainly, the man looked older than me. At first glance, he seemed to be in his mid-30s. However, my one year experience was enough to let me know how deceptive appearances were. I once called someone ‘Brother’, only to find out they were seven years older than me.

This bastard, he looked like he was in his 30s but...

“Cough.” My fists trembled and I barely managed to calm myself as I remembered the shameful past. “I’m sorry about that. But shouldn’t you apologize for poking me without notice and surprising me?”

The man laughed and asked for a handshake.

“Young man, I called out to you. However, you were so engrossed in thinking that you didn’t hear me. That is why I poked you. I’m sorry.”

I refused to shake hands with the man.

“So why did you call me?”

The man scratched his head and shrugged.

“As you know, the Yatan Temple is filled with evil energy. Ordinary people will become afraid if they stay here for a while. But I observed you, and you are fine despite all the time that passed. In addition, you can even manage to laugh alone. You, don’t you actually have great abilities?”

‘Perhaps this is...’

As I got a hunch, I checked the name above the man’s head. The man’s eyes shone.

“My name is Doran. I am a shadow who secretly protects Earl Steim. One or two days after I had gone on vacation, the Earl’s esteemed daughter was kidnapped. I tracked her and found out that she was trapped in the basement of this temple. Won’t you lend me your strength? I will give you a remuneration for the request.”

“I don’t...”

I thought the man was a user, but he was actually an NPC. Due to the perfect artificial intelligence, the distinction between users and NPCs was ambiguous and this mistake sometimes occurred. The name above his head was green, symbolizing an NPC. Then a notification window about a quest popped up.

[Rescue the Earl’s Esteemed Daughter]

Difficulty: S

Irene, the only daughter of Earl Steim, is a beautiful and innocent virgin. The elders of Yatan had kidnapped Irene in order to sacrifice her for her virgin blood.

Quest Clear Conditions: Rescue Irene within one hour after accepting the quest.

Clear Reward: 3,000 gold, a low probability of becoming the earl’s son-in-law.

* Earl’s son-in-law: Nobility stat will open, all stats +20.

You will be treated as a viscount after marrying the earl’s esteemed daughter. Power and honor will rise. You can advance into the social circle of the nobles. You will receive a monthly salary. This can be a shortcut to becoming a high-ranking official or lord.

Quest Failure: Level -2.

[Would you like to accept the quest?]

This was crazy.

CHAPTER 5

It was a completely unwelcome quest. Was it because I didn't like the rewards? That was impossible!

'This reward is really good...'

3,000 gold was worth around 3,600,000 won when converted into real cash, which was close to 40 days of revenue for me if I worked without any rest. But the great thing was the title of 'Earl's Son-in-Law'.

All stats +20! I currently had nine stats in total: strength, stamina, agility, intelligence, dexterity, composure, indomitable, dignity and insight. If I added the nobility stat, that would equal 10 in total.

If all of these stats were given 20 points, it would be a total of 200 stat points. Every time I gained a level, 10 stat points were obtained, so 200 stat points were worth 20 levels. It would also be wonderful to have a beautiful aristocratic lady as my bride.

'The road is open. But...'

There was a reason why the rewards were so good. It was an S grade quest!

'Earl Ashur's Fury was an S grade quest.'

At the time of the quest, I was level 79 but couldn't cope with the difficulty. I was killed many times during the quest and dropped down to level 73. In addition, the time spent was three months!

I was currently level -1, so I had no means of clearing an S grade quest with a time limit. Why would I accept a quest that would obviously fail?

'Furthermore, my level will fall by two if I fail.'

My body trembled with fear and anger at the thought of my level dropping to -3.

'But why on earth is it an S grade quest again?'

S grade quests were never common quests. Even the top level rankers who were above level 200 could only count the number of times that they've received an S grade quest on their left hands. However, I wasn't high level user and was currently at level -1.

I recalled what Doran said:

'As you know, the Yatan Temple is filled with evil energy. Ordinary people will become afraid if they stay here for a while. But I observed you, and you are fine despite all the time that passed. In addition, you can even manage to laugh alone. You, don't you actually have great abilities?'

There were hints in these words. The quest seemed to be generated by staying in the Yatan Temple for a certain period of time without falling into the 'fear' state. My title and composure stat lowered my chances of falling under an abnormal condition.

Was it good? Did I like it?

'Won't I be screwed if this is a forced quest? The attributes of this title are crazy, but it's like this game is trying to make me quit.'

I replied unhesitatingly,

"I can't do it. Ask someone else."

[The quest was refused.]

I refused the quest, but Doran didn't quit.

"You are the only unusual person, so please help me. A precious person's life is involved!"

[Doran is desperate. Do you understand his sad circumstances and accept the quest?]

The concept of the notification window was lost. Did it think I was in a position to take

care of others right now? I immediately swiped the window away and said, “You are mistaken. I am weak and incompetent, so I won’t be able to help you. It would be better for you to take care of it alone.”

[The quest was refused.]

“As you know, the believers of Yatan use powerful black magic! I can’t rescue the young lady from them alone! Please don’t turn away, lend me your strength!”

[Doran hasn’t given up. Would you like to accept the quest?]

“No, first of all, I don’t have the ability to do it...”

[The quest was refused.]

“You are too modest! Don’t you know that the power to ignore their fear isn’t common?”

[Doran can only depend on you. Would you like to accept the quest?]

Sometimes, there were quest NPCs who would persist like this. They had their own desperate situations. Yes, I could understand Doran’s feelings. If Doran returned without rescuing his master’s daughter, his head would go flying off.

But what about me? What if I failed and my level dropped again?

Why should I go through such terrible things because of him? I was more important than a complete stranger! The biggest problem was that I didn’t have the ability to help him in the first place.

“Please help! I am begging you!”

Doran fell to his knees.

I looked at him. This man, all the words I spoke to him were entering one ear and leaving the other. Or maybe he thought I was lying.

‘It’s probably the latter. Is it so great that I don’t feel fear while staying in the Yatan Temple? I haven’t been here before so I don’t even know what I’m supposed to feel.’

I faced Doran head on and explained with a more serious attitude,

“I’m really sorry, but I truly don’t have the strength to help you. Don’t waste your time on me; call the earl and ask for his help.”

[The quest was refused.]

“Every hour is urgent! The young lady’s life might be in danger while I go to ask the earl for help! You are the only person I can rely on! This is a request!”

[Doran is hoping for a helping hand. Would you like to accept the quest?]

The limits of patience.

“Ah, this is frustrating! Do you really need my help? I don’t want to look at you anymore, so go away!”

“Please give mercy for the sake of her life!”

“What? No! Damn. Yes, I should leave. I am going now!”

I once again refused the quest and turned away from Doran. This was a terrible quest that would cause my level to drop by two upon failure, so I wanted to avoid it. But unlike my thoughts, my feet didn’t move quickly. I was 200% over the weight limit, so my movement speed was reduced by 100%.

Doran saw that I was moving as slow as a turtle and misunderstood my actions as he teared up.

“You act so intimidatingly, but you are actually conflicted... You really do want to help me...”

“.....”

“Stop feeling conflicted and help me!”

[Doran feels hope again. Would you like to accept the quest?]

“Bullshit! I won’t help!”

[The quest was refused.]

I ignored him and hastened my steps. But once again, my speed was slow. This only deepened Doran’s misunderstanding.

“Maybe you’re conflicted because your life is busy, but the life of a person is more important! This is a request!!”

“I can’t! It isn’t possible!”

“Don’t deceive yourself! In fact, you are suffering as well! You can’t leave this place immediately, which is why there is such hesitation in your step!”

“There is no hesitation! I’m not walking slowly! My baggage is heavy, that’s all!”

Doran continued chasing after me, and my slow pace couldn’t get rid of him.

[Would you like to accept the quest?]

[Would you like to accept the quest?]

[Would you like...]

‘What a stupid jerk!’

The notification windows kept popping up no matter how much I refused. I had to make a drastic decision.

‘I can’t carry on like this. Yes, I have to refuse, even if I develop a hostile relationship with him. He isn’t a NPC I need to build up a relationship with, so it won’t hurt if he is my enemy.’

I pulled out Mamon’s greatsword and glared at Doran.

“I definitely can’t help you. If you don’t get away right now, I am prepared to hurt you.”

Doran grasped the atmosphere and took one step back. Then he slowly opened his mouth.

“I really wish you would help me...”

[Doran is asking for the last time. Would you like to accept the quest?]

Swipe!

How many times do I have to see this damn notification window?

“I won’t help! Even if I can help, I don’t want to! I won’t help!”

My stress went over the threshold and I could no longer suppress my anger. In the end, I yelled and swung Mamon’s greatsword, expressing my intent not to talk to Doran anymore.

Then...

Kwajak!

“Kaaack!”

The sensation of hitting something was transmitted through my fingertips as a scream was heard at the same time. I turned my gaze to the side of the greatsword and saw what just occurred: a believer wearing the robe of Yatan had collapsed with Mamon’s greatsword in his neck. An ominous chill went down my spine.

“I was aiming at the crazy guy, so why did the person next to him...”

As I stared at the dying believer, a new notification window popped up.

[Your relationship with the Yatan Church has become hostile.]

[You won’t be able to receive Yatan’s blessings.]

[The followers of Yatan will try to kill you when they find you.]

The atmosphere of the temple changed. While I was surrounded by dozens of Yatan believers, Doran got up and placed a hand on my shoulder and cried out, “Thank you!!”

“Eh?”

[Rescue the Earl’s Esteemed Daughter]

Difficulty: S

Irene, the only daughter of Earl Steim, is a beautiful and innocent virgin. The elders of Yatan had kidnapped Irene in order to sacrifice her for her virgin blood.

You can’t tolerate the evil deeds of Yatan’s followers. You must surely rescue Irene.

Quest Clear Conditions: Rescue Irene within one hour after accepting the quest.

Clear Reward: 3,000 gold, a low probability of becoming the earl’s son-in-law.

* Earl’s son-in-law: Nobility stat will open, all stats +20.

You will be treated as a viscount after marrying the earl’s esteemed daughter. Power and honor will rise. You can advance into the social circle of the nobles. You

will receive a monthly salary. This can be a shortcut to becoming a high-ranking official or lord.

Quest Failure: Level -2.

[The quest has been accepted.]

“Wow.”

Due to my hostile relationship with the Yatan Church, the ‘Rescue the Earl’s Esteemed Daughter’ quest was forced upon me.

“Huhuhu...”

Some might say this was unlucky. No, it was more accurate to say that I had no luck.

‘Failure once again... it will be level -3!’

At any rate, I had no luck. Perhaps I sold a country in my previous life.

“Who dares hurt Yatan’s believers! Aren’t you afraid of the curse of God Yatan?”

“God Yatan is almighty! God Yatan has already noticed your sin! You won’t be safe for the rest of your life!”

“You will pay a heavy price for your blasphemy!”

The angry voices of the Yatan followers clamored around me. Their crazy eyes were filled with absolute hostility.

‘Will I die now?’

The followers of Yatan were black magicians. Black magicians had strong curse abilities, so they were difficult to deal with.

CHAPTER 6

‘The black magicians are the problem right now...’

I was currently level -1, and my strength and stamina stats were only one point each. Mengel’s Plate Armour added five strength, for a total of six strength. When all of these stats were added up together, I totalled a measly 34 health. I might be able to punch a few of them before going to the netherworld.

‘Can I get away?’

The failure of the quest was fixed anyway. I just wanted to preserve my life. No, I had to survive. If someone died two times in a day, they wouldn’t be able to access the game for 12 hours. Okay, this was the only way!

“Log out!”

[You can’t log out of the game here.]

“Fuck! I should’ve expected this!”

It was common knowledge that it was impossible to end the game while a timed quest was underway. There was a way to force it, but I didn’t want to use it since I would get a huge penalty. After failing to log out, I looked for a way to escape. However, this was the stronghold of the enemy.

I was being surrounded by a rapidly increasing number of followers. No matter how many calculations I made, there was just no way to escape. There was no hope when I was as slow as a tortoise.

“Break through to the basement at once!”

As I was planning out my actions, Doran shouted at me before pulling out two daggers and throwing them without delay. The hand gestures were so fast that it happened in an instant.

Pepeok!

“Kuaack!”

One of the daggers struck a person's eye while the other pierced another's heart. Doran narrowed the distance towards the pained believers and wielded his dagger.

“Open up.”

The believers couldn't even scream as their necks were sliced and they vanished into a flash of grey light. I couldn't resist admiring it. The lack of information meant I didn't know the exact levels of the Yatan believers, but temple NPCs were generally at least level 150+. These believers were likely to be the same.

Doran handled them so easily that I couldn't even imagine his level.

‘Is he perhaps a named NPC?’

My impression of Doran changed. Maybe I could clear this absurd quest if I depended on him. 3,000 gold! A huge 3,600,000 won was in front of me! The earl's son-in-law! I imagined getting my hands on all stats +20 and a beautiful wife! I would become a lord with my own territory, where I could steal high taxes from the users and NPCs!

‘If I become a landlord, I will be able to get revenue every month.’

Exciting!

I began to cheer Doran on. “Good! Doran, fighting! I have admired you for a long time!”

“Eh? For a long time? When have you ever seen...”

“Ah! Danger! Over there! You must take care of your body!”

“B-Body...?”

While Doran was surprised by my sudden change in attitude, he focused on dealing with the enemies in front of him. Grey lights appeared in succession.

‘Really strong!’

Doran skillfully threw numerous hidden weapons as if they were merely extensions of his limbs. The number one person on the assassin ranking, 'Old Sword Demon', that I saw on a broadcast two months ago, was like a young child next to Doran.

'Isn't he three times stronger than Ashur? I must befriend him and ask him to assassinate Ashur!'

The Yatan believers ignored me and attacked the threat, Doran. But their efforts couldn't stop Doran's advance. Doran focused solely on those who were chanting spells, attacking them to stop their magic.

The black magicians couldn't cast their magic, making them no threat.

"Amazing! You are really amazing! Doran, you are my god!"

I heard a magic spell being recited and cheered as a black magicians mouth was pierced by Doran's dagger.

The best! By relying on the strength of the NPC, I really could complete this quest! Truly a fantastic quest! It seemed pathetic that I had been trying so hard to refuse the quest a few minutes ago!

I could barely chase Doran with my slow pace, thanks to Doran occasionally stopping.

"Are you waiting for me? How kind. Hehe."

Doran was looking around with a terrible expression. "These guys have started to use their heads."

"Huh?"

I looked around like Doran and saw that the black magicians were chanting spells at the same time.

"Blessed souls underground."

"Use your grudges and fears to ensnare the enemy."

"Those who feel fear will have their legs restrained."

“Their minds will be crushed and they will lose their willpower.”

“Become a doll with a lost soul!”

The black magicians chanting the spell alone would be stopped by Doran before they finished. Therefore, the group shared the spell by chanting the sentences one by one. Those sentences would connect to form one spell and the magic would be cast.

“Be prepared.”

I grabbed Doran’s collar and said, “Be prepared? You should do something!”

“It is too late.”

“Dammit!”

Kuoooooh!!

A line of blood was drawn on Doran’s face, and black energy rose like a mist to cover Doran.

“N-No! I am finished if you die!”

I had boarded the same boat as Doran and Doran was the oarsman. I couldn’t escape the quest failing if I was alone on this boat.

“Cough!”

I cursed and shouted towards Doran, who was coughing up blood. “Fuck! If it was going to be like this, you shouldn’t have made me feel expectant in the first place!”

At that moment. A green light flowed from the ring Doran was wearing and surrounded him. Then Doran’s complexion was gradually restored.

‘W-What?’

Doran attacked the surprised black magicians, who were chanting new spells.

“This ring is special. It protects the wearer from curses and poisons; however, the protection isn’t perfect. The damage is cumulative, so I need to avoid as much magic

as possible.”

“Yes, indeed! The great Doran is even wearing a small ring like this!”

The ring was clearly had an Epic or higher rating. Was there a way to obtain it? As I was thinking, Doran started to slaughter the enemies again. He allowed a few magic spells to be cast but eventually succeeded in creating a path.

Doran started at the entrance of the staircase leading to the basement.

“Come on!”

“Yep!”

Unlike my vigorous reply, I chased Doran down the stairs at a slow pace. The black magicians pursued us with spells, but they were no threat because Doran threw daggers as soon as he heard chanting.

“Young Lady!”

Doran and I arrived at the dark basement. Doran found a beautiful woman bound to the altar in the center of the basement and ran to her. But there was a crowd blocking him. There were a dozen black magicians.

I laughed at them. “These ridiculous bastards! They need more people than that to be our opponents! Now, Doran! Get rid of them!”

“Of course!”

Doran nodded and wielded his daggers in front of him. Doran might be tired, but the number of opponents was too small. I was excited as I imagined the black magicians turning into grey light. The quest clear signal was right around the corner.

“3,600,000 won and the earl’s daughter, here I come!”

Tatatang!

“...Eh?”

There was an unexpected result. The hidden weapons that were thrown by Doran

suddenly stopped and fell to the ground. Doran's advance was also stopped.

"Shield?"

Defense magic couldn't be used by black magicians. It was only possible for black magicians who completed their second class advancement. As I was baffled, a young woman walked out from among the black magicians. It was a woman who boasted the best beauty, a unique beauty that caused the beauty of the noble young lady to pale in comparison.

Somehow, she looked familiar? I checked her name and was shocked.

'Blood Witch!!'

The Blood Witch. ID: Yura.

The Korean user who was ranked number one on the black magician ranking and ranked number five on the unified rankings. She was a famous person who frequently appeared on TV because of her beautiful appearance and outstanding abilities. Why was she here?

Yura looked towards me and stretched out a hand. "I'm sorry, but I can't allow you to take away the sacrifice."

Peeng!

A red fire sword emerged from Yura's hand. Its momentum was fierce. Unlike a black magician who didn't have a lot of attack magic, she was well versed in it. I was intimidated as I saw the flames.

'Did I get this far, only to die?'

Why the hell was she here? As despair filled my body, a notification window popped up.

[You have been hit by a blow!]

[A legend doesn't die easily. You can resist all attacks for 5 seconds with the minimum amount of health.]

I had one health point remaining. I had temporarily forgotten about it, but the attribute of my title was activated and I temporarily had an immortal body. Yura's face was perplexed as she saw that I survived, despite being hit by her magic.

"That was clearly a critical hit... Based on the equipment, you are only around level 80. So how are you fine after being hit by that attack?"

Yura asked while hiding herself behind the black magicians in preparation for Doran's counterattack. She always had a calm smile on TV, so I was probably the only one who had seen Yura's flustered expression.

I ran forward and shouted to Doran, "Quickly! Let's finish it in five seconds! I'll use my body to block their attacks, so Doran must kill them! I believe in you, Doran! My god!"

The spells of all the black magicians, including Yura, were concentrated on me. This meant that Doran could strike freely. The best development.

'Yes, hit me! No matter how you hit, I won't die!'

Today would be the day where an ordinary user would stand up to a ranker.

I narrowed the gap towards Yura as all types of curses and attack spells hit me, while Doran followed the path I made and dealt devastation to all the black magicians. Then Doran stepped on my back and jumped towards Yura.

Yura blocked his attack despite being in a state of confusion. On the other hand, Doran's momentum rose.

'We can win!'

But was it because Doran stepped on my back?

[You have died.]

".....?"

Eh? Eeeeh? I wanted to reject this situation, but reality was cruel. A new notification window popped up as my vision turned grey.

[Quest failed!]

[Your level has dropped by 2.]

[You are now level -3.]

[As you have died two times within 24 hours, you won't be able to connect to the game for 12 hours.]

Hah, it somehow turned out like this. I gazed towards Doran fighting... No, my last sight as I closed my eyes was that damned Blood Witch.

CHAPTER 7

The average level of black magician users was level 53. Out of the 120,000 classes in Satisfy, the black magicians had the lowest average level. The Black Magician class was a combat profession, but users of this class had very weak defense and insufficient attack power.

However, Yura had been hunting alone without a party since she starting, demonstrating unmatched control skills that harmonized with her magic. Her ability to select hunting grounds was also excellent. There was a good reason why Yura surpassed two billion users to rise to fifth place in the rankings.

Three hours ago, Yura had finally reached level 230, resulting in new wings being added to the list of her abilities.

‘Now I can use defensive magic...’

Yura confirmed the A-grade spell that she acquired after much difficulty.

‘Diamond Barrier.’

It was a spell to create a shield by materializing mana with a hardness comparable to that of a diamond. It was a defense type magic that could be acquired with a black magician reached level 230.

After completing all the conditions required to learn Diamond Barrier, Yura headed straight to the Yatan Temple. As always, she headed to a temple with fewer users. It was troublesome since it was a long distance, but it couldn’t be helped. It would be annoying if she went to a place with a lot of users, due to her high popularity. It was amazing how many people recognized her, even when she concealed her face and ID.

After running for two hours, Yura arrived at the Yatan Temple and placed the prepared spell book on the altar. The moment she was about to learn new magic after professing her deep faith in God Yatan.

[A foolish group of enemies hostile to God Yatan has appeared inside the temple.]

[Guardian of the Temple]

Difficulty: S

There are foolish people who have entered in order to rescue the sacrifice to God Yatan. You must defend the dignity of God Yatan and punish the blasphemous intruders.

Quest Clear Conditions: Repel attackers or defend the sacrifice for one hour.

Clear Reward: The title 'Guardian of Yatan's Temple.'

* Guardian of Yatan's Temple: Faith +300, Health +1,000, Intelligence +60

You are an example to other believers after defending the dignity of God Yatan. God Yatan will bless you more, and the faithful will worship you.

Quest Failure: Level -2, Faith -250.

Yura was surprised since she had only experienced an S-grade quest three times, despite being level 230. Then, a lot of noise was heard in the distance.

'Is this an auto-generated quest due to the advent of an intruder? I'm lucky I came to the temple at this time.'

Yura was very motivated. She greatly desired the 'Guardian of the Yatan's Temple' title because it elevated all the important stats.

First of all, Yura grasped the location of the sacrifice and then went to the place where the disturbance was happening. She witnessed an NPC in leather armor ruthlessly slaughtering the followers of Yatan.

'An NPC who has finished the third class advancement.'

Indeed, an S-grade quest had a much higher level of difficulty. The NPC called Doran was a great threat to Yura.

'Even if I borrow the power of the believers, it will be a difficult quest to succeed.'

She received an S-grade quest after a long time, but unfortunately, the chances of success seemed low.

‘No, there is no point in guessing.’

Yura calmly dispersed her mana throughout the entire temple. This wasn’t a normal use of mana for black magicians. In other words, it was to detect the enemy. While the detection skill was only available to those with a fine mana manipulation ability, it was but a simple matter for Yura.

‘Including Doran, there are two people.’

Yura grasped the number of enemies and looked at the user following Doran. ID: Grid. Looking at his equipment, he seemed to be a level 80 user. It was surprisingly low for the person who must’ve triggered the S-grade quest.

The only one to be careful of was Doran. If so, this quest could be cleared.

Yura meticulously observed the terrain of the temple while her enemies focused on fighting the believers. She made a judgment and went down to the basement where the sacrifice was located.

The temple was too spacious and there was a lot of cover, so it was advantageous for Doran. She planned to use the hostage in the relatively small basement to limit Doran’s movement and increase the hit rate of her magic.

After a while, Doran and Grid finally entered the basement. Doran was already quite exhausted from dealing with all of the believers.

“These ridiculous bastards! They need more people than that to be our opponents! Now, Doran! Get rid of them!”

The user Grid, shouted and Doran nodded as he fired his hidden weapons in front of him.

“3,600,000 won and the earl’s daughter, here I come!”

Grid was confident about the quest succeeding. Yura felt sorry for him, but she also needed to clear her quest so she acted without any hesitation.

Tatatang!

Yura defeated Doran's hidden weapons with the recently learned Diamond Barrier and turned her gaze to the astounded Grid.

"I'm sorry, but I can't allow you to take away the sacrifice."

Doran was strong. In order to focus on him, it was wiser to deal with the relatively weak Grid first. Yura summoned fire and attacked without any delay.

[Critical!]

The greatsword was a weapon that warriors specialized in. It was clear that Grid's class was that of a warrior. If he was a warrior around level 80, then no matter how good the equipment, his maximum health would be around 4,000. But Grid wasn't wearing any special equipment. He should have approximately 3,000 health. Furthermore, warriors were very vulnerable to magic.

Yura calculated that she could deal with Grid in one hit by consuming one-fifth of her mana. It was a critical hit, so it was normal to think that Grid died. But surprisingly, Grid survived.

'How?'

Let's say that his luck was so high that he survived the critical hit. However, it was common sense for a character to become stunned after receiving 40% or more damage in a single attack. Grid was standing without being stunned as if 40% of his health hadn't been decreased.

"That was clearly a critical hit... Based on the equipment, you are only around level 80. So how are you fine after being hit by that attack?"

Yura was ranked fifth among the pool of two billion users, and she was narrowing the gap between her and the fourth-ranked person. Her gaming skills were truly overwhelming. She knew that her magic damage calculations were never wrong. Her calculations had never been wrong while playing Satisfy so far. This was a new experience for her.

That confusion it caused greatly affected her.

‘Why is this happening? Is his level actually far higher than the equipment he is wearing? No, that isn’t likely. A person who dares to wear low-level equipment during an S-grade quest... Did I overlook something?’

She tried to calmly analyze the situation, but Grid was approaching.

Step. Step.

He was a warrior walking a very slow pace, as if he wasn’t in a hurry to narrow the gap towards the black magicians. It was an attitude that seemed to disregard Yura’s fifth place ranking. Grid’s behavior seemed to be saying to Yura, ‘I am giving you enough time to chant a spell. Use your best magic.’

An obvious provocation! Yura, who had a strong self-esteem, was furious. As Grid wished, she started to chant the top-level attack magic. She was determined to turn him into ashes, along with Doran.

“Great god of the darkness, your humble servant calls you. Fill this place with darkness and plant fear in the enemies’ hearts, show your power to those who worship you.”

As magic power started to rise, the torches lighting up the basement started to go out. The torches actually weren’t turned off; the magic just turned the flames black. Soon, the darkness swallowed up this area.

A normal enemy would lose their vision and stop due to the added ‘fear’ effect of this spell. In fact, Doran hesitated for a moment from where he was hunting the black magicians behind Grid. But Grid was approaching like it was nothing. He had a higher resistance than an NPC who had completed the third class advancement.

‘What is his identity...’

The ID was too strange. He wasn’t a ranker, then how was he so strong? Her confusion grew and Yura couldn’t easily recover. But the spell was fully completed.

“Dark Storm!”

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

A silent storm formed in the darkness and struck Grid. The effect of the storm caused the pillars supporting the basement to wobble, while cracks appeared on the ground and walls. A mighty power that could topple the whole temple! It was the moment when a high-ranking dark attack magic was revealed.

Kwaang!

Grid's body, that was already damaged from the black magicians' attacks, was overwhelmed by the storm. Yura believed that Grid would turn into a grey light. But Grid was still fine as he kept walking forward, penetrating through the storm without pause.

On the other hand, Doran's body behind him was a rag, barely following Grid as a green light emerged from his ring. Even a third advancement NPC couldn't cope with the magic, so why was this user fine?

"You... what are you?"

Yura was a smart girl. She could see through anything with logic. In her 21 years of life, she had been praised by everyone she met for her beauty and intelligence. She used her innate insight on her work, earning her a reputation of a talented person who could be used everywhere.

Satisfy was the path that she finally chose.

Anyway, this brilliant Yura couldn't figure out the man called Grid.

'This is an impossibility in the current Satisfy. This overwhelming presence isn't an NPC but a human... Is he a bugged user? No, Satisfy is controlled by the world's leading supercomputer, Morpheus, so there are no bugs. There is clearly a rational way to get this strength. How did he gain such strength?'

It was the first time she encountered something beyond her common sense. She was baffled and very curious. At this moment, the person called Grid was deeply imprinted onto Yura's mind.

On the other hand, Grid was coming closer to her with imposing footsteps. Yura couldn't easily give up so she prepared to fight. Then Doran stepped on Grid's back, jumped up, and attacked her.

Kaaang!

Yura hurriedly blocked Doran's attack magic and turned her gaze towards Grid, expecting an attack, only for her eyes to widen. The body of Grid, that had been fine just a moment ago, was covered with a grey light and was disappearing.

".....?"

Afterwards, Yura received big injuries as she struggled with Doran and barely managed to subdue him. She stared at the place where Grid disappeared, ignoring the system window that informed her of the success of the quest.

'Even if he were hit by Dark Storm, he wouldn't have died so suddenly. He must've been penalized and forcibly logged out. Why?'

Yura's expression gradually worsened as she thought about it.

"Did he yield the quest to me...?"

She felt helpless and received Grid's sympathy. That day became the worst day to Yura, of when her sturdy pride was thoroughly shattered.

CHAPTER 8

“Uwaaaack! Doran, that bastard! He forcibly gave me a quest I didn’t want, only to kill his teammate? Fuck! Thieves, robbers, and thugs, now I know why there are all these names. Doran! In the future, this name itself will be a curse!”

I left the capsule, opened the window and shouted outside. The rain was strong so my voice wasn’t heard by the people in the neighborhood. Thanks to that, I was able to shout for a long time.

It wasn’t 4 o’clock in the morning yet. It was a day when my family could rest until late afternoon due to the heavy rain, but I couldn’t access the game for 12 hours during such a golden holiday season!

“Level -3...the more I think about it, the worse I feel. Doran, Doran, Doran!”

I headed to the bathroom to cool off my head that was flush with anger. I soaked my face in cold water and listened to the gushing stream of water. I felt much better after washing my head for two days straight.

“...Doran isn’t to blame for the situation.”

Unlike my prediction, Doran was extremely strong and fought well. I was a bridesmaid and didn’t have to do anything. Doran took care of all of the enemies by himself. I only had a chance to succeed in the quest due to Doran’s power.

Yes, Doran did really well. However, an unexpected situation occurred. The appearance of a ranker.

“Damn witch...”

Why had Yura appeared there? She was a black magician. The Yatan Temple was an important base for black magicians, so it wasn’t unusual for her to appear there at any time. Why did Yura interfere? I was an intruder in the temple and she was obliged to protect the temple. It was obvious that she would be hostile to me. That was understandable.

“The moment I accepted the quest, the black magicians in the temple had a separate

quest to stop me. The real enemies are the users, not the NPCs. There is a reason why Doran was so strong. No wonder why the S-grade quest felt too easy.'

I concluded.

'Witch... thanks to me invoking the quest, you were able to receive a lot of benefits. A girl who didn't shed blood or tears. She tried to kill me instead of thanking me...'

After I died, Yura would've succeeded in the quest. Yura was strong and Doran was quite exhausted. It was really detestable.

It was because of me that Yura received the quest in the first place, and the reason Doran was so tired was because I was weak. Yura just sat back and ate bread. The bread that I had put in her mouth.

"Bad person..."

A ranker over level 200 had snatched the quest of a minus level! I entered the capsule, connected to the Internet, and then searched for Yura.

Yura, I just typed it in and hundreds, no, thousands of related links filled the screen. I only checked the postings of highly popular blogs and large-scale communities and managed to get information about Yura.

Contrary to her creepy nickname of the 'Blood Witch', she was well loved and respected, as well as a target of envy.

Thanks to her superb beauty, perfect gaming skills and ideal image in the media, she was praised by both men and women. It also transcended race. There were thousands of fan clubs created on overseas servers. At first glance, she was even more popular than Hollywood's top actors.

'That is the modern world now.'

Satisfy was more colorful, thrilling and dramatic than any movie, so the main characters of Satisfy enjoyed more popularity than movie stars. If someone watched TV these days, hundreds of channels were filled with Satisfy related programs. They also achieved high ratings, so Satisfy profession news channels were created.

Of course, it wasn't just limited to South Korea. Satisfy had more than two billion users.

The broadcasting market wasn't just South Korea, but the world. As a result, the movie actors received less exposure than Satisfy's protagonists, the rankers.

In particular, Yura was much more recognizable than other rankers due to her beauty. Thanks to that, she had both money and fame. It was a perfect contrast to me, who was in debt due to Satisfy.

'I am suffering because of the game, while she is living a fantastic life because of it.'

Enjoying her favorite game while being recognized by the world? I was incredibly envious. If I was Yura, I would have no disappointments in my life.

"...A person like you had to take away a poor person's quest."

She wasn't a witch. She was just a really wicked girl.

Kwaduduk!

I opened up the hologram keyboard and started to comment on Yura related posts one by one.

'Yura is garbage. She interfered in the quest of a low-level user. She is completely different from her appearance on TV. Her personality is rotten.'

'Yura isn't very pretty when you see her in real life. She got plastic surgery a facelift. There is dirt on her nose and she always looks like she is chewing shit. Her smile is just for the TV.'

'Why is Yura good??? She is a bad person. How many people has she ruined? She also ruined my brother-in-law.'

'A ranker interfered in a quest!! Don't be fooled by the image created on TV.'

"Huhuhu...! Kukukuk!"

I informed people about what I actually experienced with Yura. I felt great because I became a great journalist who spread the truth to the people deceived by false information. The terrible reality that I experienced a while ago was gradually fading from my mind!

Tadak. Tadadak.

I continued posting comments. My ten fingers tapped against the hologram keyboard that glowed in the darkness. A person tapping on the keyboard in the darkened room, someone who saw it might think it was beautiful and mysterious.

“Oppa... have you finally gone crazy?”

Writing malicious comments... no, it was a movement to reveal the truth.

I jumped in surprise at the voice that was suddenly heard. I turned my gaze towards the source and saw Sehee staring at me from the door.

“You surprised me.”

I placed my hand on my chest, while Sehee entered my room with folded arms.

“I was going to the toilet when I heard Oppa giggling in your room. You were crazy about the game, so I thought you went crazy in reality. I was worried about Oppa and decided to check on you. Are you crazy? Please say that you’re not.”

“...Why are you speaking like that to your Oppa? I’m not crazy.”

“I’m glad you’re not crazy yet. Urgh, something smells. Take a look at your head, you should wash more. And get rid of that bowl of rice that you ate! No, why are you eating rice in your room in the first place? You should eat together with us... bah, no.”

Sehee looked at the empty rice bowls and side dishes that I stacked up and started cleaning up.

“This girl, she is nice and pretty. It is good that she doesn’t resemble me.”

I watched her approvingly. Sehee felt my gaze and turned around.

“Don’t just sit there and watch. If you’re not busy, shouldn’t you help? No. Go and wash up. I don’t like that appearance.”

“Leave it and I’ll take care of it. Why are you getting up when it isn’t even morning yet? Go back to sleep.”

“I saw Oppa laughing in a creepy manner, so my sleepiness has fled. Please go wash up. I want to see your face properly after a long time... ah, no! Wash off that dirty and unpleasant scent!”

When Sehee was one year old, I was nine years old. Was it right for my younger sister to act like this?

‘If I knew this would happen, I would’ve washed up when I washed my head.’

I headed to the bathroom in an annoyed mood. I washed my head with soap and dried it with a towel. But why was my hair so stiff?

“...It was laundry soap.”

I returned to my room with my stiff hair and smelled something different in my room. It was a rather refreshing scent. Did she spray perfume? Sehee was truly meticulous. The room had been cleaned and tidied up during the time I used to wash up. She was a very diligent girl, unlike me. She would be a nice bride.

I saw Sehee sitting in the capsule and laying down on my bed.

“Connect to the Internet if you want~”

Anyway, it wasn’t like I could access the game. I easily yielded the capsule to my little sister.

Sehee shrugged and unexpectedly sent me a look of disdain. “Oppa... are you a keyboard warrior?”

“Keyboard warrior?”

What did that mean? When I looked up, Sehee got up and pointed her finger to the monitor floating in front of the capsule.

“Why are you spreading false rumors about a woman younger than you? Even if there is a reason, this behavior is too naughty. I’m really disappointed in Oppa.”

Her voice sank. Sehee was sincerely angry. I belatedly realized my mistake and hurriedly checked the monitor. The damning list of comments that I made about Yura was still showing.

Dammit! I should've turned off my Internet window!

"S-Sehee, this..."

"How low."

I tried to explain to Sehee, but she returned to her room and locked the door without giving me a chance to talk. The door wouldn't open, no matter how pathetically I acted. I realized that the last bit of good opinion my sister had towards me was completely lost.

This...what is this!

"This is all due to that witch!"

I appealed to Sehee in front of her room. I didn't realize that I fell asleep there until I was woken up by my mother. My body wasn't trained at all! It hurts...

I placed a cold patch on my body and fell asleep again. Then the next day.

"Huaaah~~"

I opened my eyes and saw that it was 11 a.m. My parents went to work at dawn and Sehee would be in school for three hours already.

"I slept only six hours. I can't oversleep because of my diligence... Why did God make me so diligent?"

I scratched my hips above my underwear while heading to the kitchen. I was hungry but it was too annoying to cook.

"Forget it."

I ignored the protesting cries of my stomach and headed to the living room. Then I lay on the sofa and turned on the TV. It was a Satisfy related channel

Satisfy was even covered on the housewives channel. The title of the program was 'How to meet a young man through Satisfy!' It was a program that dealt with the process of making a character in Satisfy look as young and pretty as possible.

‘...PD Cheon Jaende?’

It seemed to have pretty high viewership. I skipped past a man who didn’t think he would live long after a phone call from his wife. I stopped at a program called ‘Satisfy’s Hot Issues.’

A cute female reporter was greeting an Asian youth around my age. There was a close up of the young man’s face. At the bottom of the screen, the ID ‘Katz’ and level ‘203’ appeared as subtitles.

“Katz is already level 200?”

Katz was a celebrity. He was notorious due to his arrogance, but he was always one of the top ranks in the warrior class. Three months ago, he was level 170 but now he was already level 203? At that level, he would be at the top of the unified rankings.

‘How did he get over 30 levels in three months?’

The reporter on screen was asking the same question as me.

–Katz, did you know that you are one of the biggest issues in Satisfy these days? Our producers were very surprised. In just three months, Katz has climbed up to the 53rd ranking. What is the secret to your rapid growth over such a short period of time?

Katz swept a hand over his well-trimmed hair and smiled smugly.

–Three months ago, I obtained an epic class. I accepted this interview today to reveal my epic class.

–Yes?!

The reporter was shocked and I also stopped scratching at my groin. The news of an epic class was so shocking that the reporter couldn’t respond to Katz. In the past year, only two epic class changes had appeared in Satisfy. Its value transcended the imagination. But Katz got his hands on a new epic class.

‘The third epic class...’

There was no information about the previous epic classes that appeared. The contents of the first class change book were confidential when circulated around the item

trading sites, and no one knew who the owner was.

The second epic class belonged to Agnus, who was ranked 7th on the unified rankings, but nobody knew what class he had.

It was because most users, especially top rankers, were extremely reluctant to disclose their information. Information was power!

There was a fierce competition to survive in Satisfy. The information shared among large sites was actually quite limited. Most users kept their information to themselves. I would do the same.

However, Katz was revealing his class himself. He was famous for liking colorful and prominent things.

Anyway, this was a huge scoop. It was possible that the ratings record might be broken.

I remained fixed on this channel. I focused on the screen, while the reporter's eyes were shining with excitement.

–What class are you?

–The name of my epic class is 'Blood Warrior'.

–Is it as special and terrible as the name implies?

It wasn't special or terrifying. It was a very common and mundane name. A sloppy name for an epic class. But Katz seemed to like the childish name.

–The name isn't that great, but it is a very fantastic class. Let me tell you one important feature...

Katz pulled out the sword hanging from his waist, emitting a tremendous aura. I would be able to pay off all of my debt if I just sold that sword.

–Look.

Katz's eyes were tinged with red. At the same time, his sword started to wriggle.

CHAPTER 9

The camera zoomed in on Katz' sword.

Hundreds, no thousands of blood vessels appeared on the blade and grew at a fast pace, completely covering the sword. Within a short time, Katz's sword was covered with red blood vessels and pulsated like a living heart. However, the sword's edge actually became sharper instead of disappearing. It was a very menacing appearance. On the other hand, it was also a bizarre and disgusting appearance.

But Katz patted the wriggling red sword as if it were adorable.

-This is my passive skill. Any weapon held in my hand would be transformed into this shape. When I attack an enemy with this modified weapon, I can absorb a certain amount of health in proportion to my attack power. Thanks to this, my reliance on potions has greatly reduced and hunting alone has become easier. The more I attack, the more I can take advantage of this tremendous hunting speed. In addition to this, powerful combat skills were created, so I am able to raise my level quickly.

The reporter, whose face was pallid, continued the interview while ignoring the hideous sword.

-Is an epic class that much stronger than regular classes?

-That is a stupid question. Isn't this natural? Even if it was only a rare class, it exerts a special power over general classes. I can assure you of this: I will rise to the number one ranking sooner or later. I have that type of ability.

-Number one in the top 10 rankings that haven't changed in the past year? All 10 users protect their position and won't give it to anyone. This means that the top 10 rankers are extraordinary. Isn't it too much to declare that you can catch up to them just because of one class?

Was the reporter stupid? The arrogant Katz was going to become upset again.

As I expected, Katz started frowning. He looked at the reporter and declared.

-You say that it is just because of one class? How funny! I have a natural talent! The class

of Blood Warrior is just a means to effectively show my talent! Agnus got an epic class much sooner and could only reach 7th place in the rankings. I'll let everyone know that I am fundamentally different from Agnus!

According to the rumors, Katz was the son of a leading Japanese conglomerate. This was why he was famous for his high pride. After scaring the reporter who spat the mocking remark, Katz took the microphone from her and declared,

-Everybody listen up! This Katz will soon be first place in the unified rankings! The reason I announced my class today is to make the existing rankers aware of my strength and to make them tremble in fear. Kukuk, just wait! Sooner or later, I will cast you all aside!

Katz was about to return the microphone to the reporter when he suddenly stopped. Then he asked the reporter.

-Did you say that this is a Korean broadcasting station?

The reporter nodded at the words. Katz smiled at her.

-This worked out well. Tell this to Yura: don't be so proud of being part of a country that has nothing except for S.A Group. The era of Korean gaming experts is over. I will trample on her, the last pride of the Korean gamers, sooner or later. Hahahat!

The reporter's eyes were tearful while her face distorted like she was smelling chicken poo. I clicked my tongue while watching Katz.

"The microphones for broadcasting stations in the game are limited and expensive items. Is he proud because of all his money? Mister natural wealth. But Blood Warrior..."

I was envious. Drain health skills always showed great efficiency in past games. Furthermore, the combat skills that Katz boasted were powerful skills of an epic class. At first glance, Blood Warrior was a powerful class.

"It isn't more than me."

Pagma's Descendant was a production class. Production classes usually didn't have any attack skills, so it was likely that Pagma's Descendant was the same. But that didn't mean I was weak in battle. Pagma's Descendant was a legendary class that allowed me to go against Yura.

My status resistance was extremely high, and the immortal mode that lasted five seconds was a scam. It was possible to grow as a huge tanker. But was that all? All equipment could be worn without restrictions. It might be possible to cover the insufficient combat strength with the power of items.

“In addition, production classes are money factories.”

Why were there so many users who chose production classes over hunting? The reason was money.

Pagma’s Descendant was a legendary blacksmith class! It was a goose that laid golden eggs.

‘If I make a good item and sell it, I might be able to escape from my debt.’

I believed it was a class that could make me hundreds of millions of won. I returned to my room and turned on the capsule. Then I went on the Internet to find information about blacksmiths.

There was a lot of unfamiliar jargon and knowledge to memorize, but I concentrated on studying as much as possible. How much time passed?

While having another attack of hunger, I entered the living room when I heard a big fuss from the TV.

The ‘Breaking News’ subtitle appeared on the TV screen.

–I just received breaking news. It is said that the Yatan Temple, located in the northern part of the Eternal Kingdom, has collapsed. It is surprising and unusual for a well-preserved temple to collapse overnight. What is the story behind it? Let’s go to the scene. I am Reporter Lee Kyungmin.

The screen shifted from the studio to a familiar place.

“This place...”

A location was illuminated on the TV. It was the Yatan Temple where he resurrected yesterday and met Doran. The huge temple, larger than the Capitol Building, was surprisingly half collapsed.

When I saw the scene, I recalled the dark storm caused by Yura.

‘That magic... was it huge enough to destroy the temple? She is a really horrible girl to use such a fearsome spell on people.’

My fear of the witch I faced yesterday slowly amplified over time. If we accidentally met on the street by chance, I was afraid that I would pee my pants. Katz said he could beat her?

“Bastard. You really don’t know who you are talking about. She is already in a different dimension. A monster.”

The male reporter conveyed the news.

–At around 3:40 a.m. today, a user visited this place and witnessed an amazing sight. Korea’s number one ranker, who is fifth in the unified rankings, Yura was fighting someone. Who did she fight that she had to use enough strength to destroy the temple? Was it a struggle with a top ranker? If so, why were they fighting in this place? Was there perhaps a hidden quest? There are many questions. Then let’s listen to the testimony of an eyewitness.

A boy, who seemed to be a middle school student, was caught on camera.

The boy’s ID and level were subtitled at the bottom.

The boy spoke,

–Yesterday, I was here because of a quest. I was forced to flee to the temple while being chased by a monster. The believers who should’ve been present weren’t there. However, a large commotion was coming from underground, so I went down to the basement...

The boy stopped talking and asked the reporter.

–Is there a mosaic over my face right now? It is time for me to go to school. If my mother catches me in the capsule, I’m dead.

At almost the same time, the boy’s face and ID were completely covered with a mosaic. The reporter nodded.

–Of course there is a mosaic. There is voice modulation as well. Please tell me with

confidence.

The stupid boy sighed with relief. Poor guy... his mum would kill him. His unhappiness would be my happiness! I felt better.

The boy continued,

–I went down to the basement and saw Yura. I was captivated by her beauty. Mister, have you seen Yura? Really! She is even prettier than Kim Taehee! A complete goddess!

–People around the world are already aware of her beauty. We will put aside that story. What was happening in the basement?

–It was amazing.

–What specifically was so amazing?

–There were almost 20 black magicians constantly casting magic at a single person, but he didn't receive a single point of damage. Even the curses had no effect. He laughed like he didn't feel anything and moved towards Yura. Yura was nervous.

The reporter was confused.

–The basic level of the Yatan Temple's NPCs is known to be 160. He was attacked by level 160 NPCs and received no damage?

–It was like he resisted all of it. Really.

–Resisted dozens of spells? That is impossible, even for a top ranker... Is he ranked higher than Yura?

The reporter's expression wasn't happy, but the boy didn't care and continued speaking.

–He isn't a top ranker. I have never seen the face before. Nevertheless, he defeated all of the black magicians and threatened Yura. Yura used Dark Storm...no, it seemed like she used every bit of magic she had. It was too strong that it even broke the temple, but that user was fine. Yura's expression was disturbed as she stared at him with an expression similar to fear... I am a member of Yura's fan club, so I know that Yura isn't the type of person to look like that. I never imagined that Yura could make such an expression.

The reported looked dubious but still showed great interest.

–So what happened in the end? And what was the man's ID?

The boy shook his head.

–ID... Well, that... what was it? I can't remember. I was so entranced by Yura's beauty that I didn't observe him properly. Then I was killed by a falling pillar, so I don't know the result.

–I see... Who is the man who dealt with 20 black magicians and Yura, despite not being a top ranker? I would like to know. This is Reporter Lee Kyungmin.

Unbelievable! The hand holding the remote control shook. My heart started thumping. The man in question on the news, it was me. This was an opportunity. Since this incident happened on TV, I would receive lots of requests for interviews and would be able to make a profit from shooting commercials.

The screen switched back to the studio, with a panel filled with experts discussed the man in question, me. I called the broadcasting station right away.

(Hello, this is BCC's viewers consultation center. How can I help you?)

“The man from the breaking news. Aren't you looking for him right now? The person who fought Yura.

(Yes. Do you have a tip?)

“The person is me.”

(...Ah, yes. As part of the confirmation process, can you give me your Satisfy ID and some brief information?)

“My ID is Grid. My class is Pagma's Descendant and my level is -3. Oh, Pagma's Descendant is a class obtained from a legendary class change book...”

Tutu-

“.....”

The station one-sidedly hung up and didn't pick up my call again. It seemed that my number had been registered as spam.

"Stupid person! You will regret missing out on the scoop of a lifetime!"

I wanted to try other stations, but decided to let it go. As I thought about it calmly, I was reluctant to leak information about the minus level and legendary class.

"It isn't the time yet, right?"

I focused on the TV screen. Then I saw a familiar figure on TV.

"Doran...?"

It was really Doran. The present TV screen showed a large image of the ruins of the Yatan Temple, with a small box at the top where the experts were discussing. Doran was in the center of the big screen. He was too small so the cameraman didn't seem to see him, but I was able to recognize Doran.

I pushed my face right in front of the TV and watched Doran quietly. He was barely crawling from the ruined temple, a woman held in his arms. The identity of the woman was the earl's esteemed daughter that Doran had been looking for.

The destruction of the temple caused great confusion among the believers, allowing Doran to somehow rescue her. The woman stood up and screamed something at Doran. She seemed to be crying. Then Doran handed something small to the woman. After a short time, he died and turned into a grey light. The woman shed tears and headed elsewhere while cherishing the item she received from Doran.

"Doran...died..."

He wasn't a human but an NPC. A false life made by the system. However, it wasn't comfortable watching the death of an NPC I built a bond with. They had minds and a clear body temperature.

"Also, the ring..."

I trembled as I recalled the effects of the ring that Doran had worn.

"When an NPC dies, all their equipment will disappear as well... That ring, if you were

going to die anyway, you should've given it to me."

I looked out the window where rain was still pouring down. I didn't feel well. In addition, I was hungry. After satisfying my hunger, I connected to the Internet again to gather as much information about blacksmiths as possible.

The time was 3:55 p.m. The 12-hour penalty was over. I had to log on to Satisfy.

"Login."

CHAPTER 10

“Going to the Mubaid Ruins, one must be level 130 or higher!”

“Looking for those who want to hunt in the Grey Forest ~ A level 130 warrior is waiting for people higher than level 96~”

“Recruiting people for the Guardian of the Forest raid! A level 190 archer, level 181 martial artist, and other top rankers will join! Your class and level don’t matter! Anyone will do!”

When I accessed the game, I stood in a town square. I couldn’t resurrect at the Yatan Temple due to being in a hostile relationship with the Yatan Church.

‘Bairan Village?’

It was the place I visited before proceeding with Ashur’s quest. I frowned as I recalled the past memories.

“I got turned around.”

The monsters near Bairan Village were at least level 100. In addition, they were all ferocious monsters. The level of users here was at least the mid-80s, and they always needed a party when hunting. It was a dangerous place where users below level 120 couldn’t leave the village alone.

In the past, I wandered around here alone while searching for the Northern End Cave and died. At that time, the durability of some of my equipment was reduced to zero and my boots and gauntlets shattered.

“I ended up resurrecting at this place.”

Maybe I was some stupid god in my past life. I probably dishonoured Lady Luck in my past life, then my memories were erased and I was banished to the human world. Since then, I lived an unlucky life.

‘This is true. I can’t be so unlucky unless I sinned directly against the goddess of luck.’

I placed my forehead on a wall and blamed my past life. I couldn't be here forever, so I recovered my spirit.

"I should go to another village."

Right now, the urgent thing was to raise my level. I wanted to escape from the minus level as soon as possible. There was no reason to stay in a village where hunting was impossible. I found a horse-drawn carriage waiting for customers in a corner of the square and asked the coachman.

"What is the safest village near here?"

"Winston Village. Many novice travelers visit that place. Do you need a driver to take you there?"

"How much?"

The coachman raised one finger. He was a crook. Carriages were means of transportation for the rich: they were tremendous luxuries for debt-ridden people like me. It was a luxury comparable to eating a whole marinated chicken for one meal!

But there was nothing I could do. Right now, it was impossible for me to move to another village with my own power. If I left the village, I would only walk a little bit before dying. I handed over one silver while shedding tears.

The coachman looked at me. "What are you doing? It is 10 gold."

I made a surprised expression, as if I really didn't know. "Heok! 10 gold? It is 10 gold, not 10 silver?"

"This must be the first time you are taking a carriage. In the safe zone, the base fare for a carriage is set at five gold. In a monster-infested area such as this, there should be some profit for the high risk. This price is actually cheap. Winston is close to here, so it is only the basic fare."

"You are charging so much just for driving a carriage!"

"Tsk tsk, this is why I don't like novice travelers. Don't you know that all the monsters in the vicinity will attack as soon as they find humans?"

“No! I know that there aren’t any monsters fast enough to catch up to the speed of a carriage!”

The coachman flinched. My point had struck him. The coachman coughed and explained, “Obviously, the monsters have slow feet. But they know the terrain and have the instincts of natural hunters. They use these advantages to catch up.”

It was like selling drugs.

“Then you should be vigilant.”

“Cough... then I will accept nine gold.”

Okay. The price bargaining had begun. The basic rule of bargaining was to cut it as much as possible!

“10 silver.”

“.....”

“Excuse me?”

“.....”

What? Why wasn’t he saying anything? The response was different than expected. Wasn’t it normal to say, ‘10 gold is too cheap. I will accept eight gold?’ Then I would return with 20 silver, the coachman would offer seven gold. Then 30 silver, six gold...

This was my grand plan to complete the bargaining at around two gold. But the coachman just ignored me, making the plan become distorted.

“Aren’t you going to bargain?”

“Who in the world would bargain with a crook like you? This useless bastard! I was kind enough to cut it to nine gold, yet you offered 10 silver? You want me to bargain? Who is going to make a deal with a bastard like you?”

“Isn’t there the saying, ‘ the customers is king?!’ I will sue you and make you unemployed!”

“If you want to sue me, do it! Do you think the union will take your side? Get lost, you insane bastard!”

In Patrian, my bargaining was always successful because my reputation and affinity with the residents were at the maximum. Even if it didn't work, I just laughed it off. However, this response was entirely new to me.

It was serious. At this rate, I wouldn't be able to ride the carriage. Currently, I only had 3 gold and 11 silver. The difficulty of the Ashur quest was so terrible that I spent a lot of my money on potions.

“Please... My sick mother is in Winston Village all alone... She will die soon. What a sad son I will be if I can't watch my mother's last moments... Please take pity on me and consider the bargain.”

I looked as miserable as possible and told a heartbreaking story.

But the cold-hearted coachman just snorted. “You are obviously telling a lie. You didn't even plan to go to Winston Village in the beginning, so who would believe you now?”

“...Sheesh, you're smarter than you look.”

“W-What! You cheap bastard!”

There was no chance of this succeeding. I ran away from the coachman who chased me with a red face and visited other carriages. But despite being as careful as possible, it was impossible to bargain it down to three gold. No matter what heartbreaking stories I used, the limit was 8 gold and 90 silver.

I was frustrated by Satisfy's modern society.

“Why?”

Was it necessary to be stuck at level -3 while being isolated in the remote Bairan Village?

“I can't do that.”

I had a means to obtain the money for the carriage. Just make items! If I made an item, I could gain some experience. If it had a normal rating, I could sell it to a store. I opened

the skills window and confirmed the 'Blacksmith Craftsmanship Skill.'

[Blacksmith Craftsmanship Skill]

Lv: Master

Produce equipment items that you know how to make.

There is a certain probability of creating rare rated items.

There is a low probability of creating epic rated items.

There is a rare probability of creating unique rated items.

* Due to the effect of mastering the skill, the attributes of all items are increased by 10%.

* When rare rated items are produced, all stats will permanently rise by +2.

Reputation throughout the continent will rise by +30.

* When epic rated items are produced, all stats will permanently rise by +4.

Reputation throughout the continent will rise by +80.

* When unique rated items are produced, all stats will permanently rise by +12.

Reputation throughout the continent will rise by +300.

"This is absurd..."

According to the rankings, the first place blacksmith only had intermediate level blacksmith skills. Despite producing tens of thousands of items by the time he reached level 110, he barely reached the intermediate level. Thus, he said that production skill levels are hard to raise.

However, I basically mastered the 'Blacksmith Craftsmanship Skill', which was beyond the 'Advanced Blacksmith Technique' and 'Intermediate Blacksmith Technique'. If the person ranked number one in the blacksmith rankings were aware of my presence, he would probably quit the game.

‘When compared to him, I finally realize the greatness of a legendary class.’

I then confirmed the other ‘Legendary Blacksmith’s Craftsmanship Skill.’

[Legendary Blacksmith’s Craftsmanship Skill]

Lv. 1

Produce equipment items that you know how to make.

You can create the production methods for a new item with the ‘Legendary Blacksmith’s Creation’ skill.

There is a certain probability of producing rare~ epic rated items.

There is a rare probability of creating unique rated items.

There is a very rare probability of creating legendary rated items.

*All stats of a production item will increase by 10%.

* When rare rated items are produced, all stats will permanently rise by +2 and reputation throughout the continent will rise by +30.

* When epic rated items are produced, all stats will permanently rise by +4 and reputation throughout the continent will rise by +80.

* When unique rated items are produced, all stats will permanently rise by +12 and reputation throughout the continent will rise by +300.

* When legendary rated items are produced, all stats will permanently rise by +25 and reputation throughout the continent will rise by +1,000.

* Something special will occur with every five legendary items created.

“Wow...”

The ‘Legendary Blacksmith’s Craftsmanship Skill’ was only level one. Nevertheless, it was far superior to the mastered ‘Blacksmith Craftsmanship Skill’. I couldn’t help

admiring it. I was excited and immediately confirmed the 'Legendary Blacksmith's Creation' skill.

[Legendary Blacksmith's Creation Skill]

You can create three equipment item production methods every time the skill level of the 'Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill' goes up.

Number of items that can be created at present: 3/3

* When items are produced using this skill, the name of the creator is automatically placed on the item.

"Create an item? What is the method?"

The explanation wasn't easy to understand. Seeing was believing. I decided to try it out. I used the Legendary Blacksmith's Creation Skill without hesitation.

[What item do you want to create?]

The most important item was naturally a weapon. A weapon allowed quick hunting and was directly linked to high levels. Among the weapons, I thought the best one was a greatsword.

Thick, big, beautiful...

A big sword that could smash the enemy's armor was a man's romance! Up to this point, I never selected a weapon other than a greatsword in games. Then first, let's make a greatsword.

"Greatsword."

[Have you decided?]

“Yes.”

[What materials would you like to use?]

Ohu~ that's right. I was creating a production method, so I needed to use the materials. Wasn't it natural to use special materials? I thought of the person asking for party members to go on the 'Guardian of the Forest' boss raid.

'I heard that the guardian of the forest drops the best mineral so far... the name is...'

I recalled it and replied, “Blue Orichalcum.”

[Have you decided?]

“Yes.”

CHAPTER 11

[Please design the item.]

A blank blueprint appeared in front of me. I was baffled.

‘Design? How do I do that?’

I then knew what I should have done. Rather than visualize modern weapons such tanks and jet fighters, I needed to design a sword. Wasn’t it just a matter of the shape? I thought hard and started drawing on the blueprint with my finger. A correction effect seemed to be applied, as the picture perfectly displayed my thoughts.

‘I have to make it cool.’

First, the length of the blade was 2m and the width was 80cm. The thickness was 8cm. The length of the handle was set at 40cm.

“...This is the appearance of a greatsword that can be seen anywhere.”

The finished picture showed the limits of my impoverished imagination. I pondered for a moment before thinking of a good idea. I changed the shape of the blade to something curved like a scimitar and then extended the length of the blade to 3m.

“Is this okay?”

I liked the finished picture. It was like I was looking at a large scimitar with a short handle. At the same time, it had the heavy weight of a greatsword.

‘It is reminiscent of a shark’s profile. The part of the blade is like a shark fin, and the end of the handle is a shark tail.’

I admired the finished work for a while.

‘I have made something sophisticated and cool!’

It gave the impression of a swimming shark. If I held it, some people might have the

mistaken impression that I was carrying a shark and be shocked.

‘I didn’t know I would be so good at designing. Once I make money and pay back the debt, I should change my major to design.’

I felt great satisfaction as I clicked on the OK button at the bottom of the blueprint.

[Have you decided? When you complete the blueprint, the number of available creations from the creation skill will decrease by one.]

“Yes.”

Once I replied, numbers and languages quickly covered the blueprint. Figures were being calculated. It seemed that the system was calculating the details that I lacked in my design. After a while, an improved and completed design appeared. A bunch of Jargon and complicated numbers covered the blueprint.

“Eh?”

I could not fully understand the jargon and numbers on the blueprint. I looked at the design contents and checked if there were any faults. It was amazing. I understood that contents of an item design that I had never even seen or studied.

‘The class compensation effect!’

It was really great; I felt like an actual great blacksmith. As I was admiring it, a notification window popped up.

[Please describe the characteristics of the item.]

“That’s right! Finally, the most important part is left!”

I was excited.

“This is an outstanding weapon. The attack power is one million... no, it is more than

10 million and the weight is only one. There is no level requirement. There is an option to absorb health with every attack. Can cause meteors to fall. The enemy will unconditionally die from one hit. Of course, defense is ignored. Anyway, this weapon is enough to hunt a dragon alone.”

[That isn’t possible. The performance and options of an item can’t be arbitrarily set. The performance and options are determined by taking into account the materials used, the design, and the description of the features.]

...Too bad.

I tried to make the explanation as good as possible.

“It is a greatsword, but thanks to its unusual shape, its cutting power is tremendous. The protruding part that resembles a shark’s fin will allow for unexpected attacks, and can even go through armor. Blue orichalcum is used as the material, so it is light and durable. And... and... um... well, that will be enough.”

Was my vocabulary so lacking? I was horribly ashamed. In the first place, I only knew that blue orichalcum was light and durable. I didn’t know the exact information, so I can’t explain the merits.

“Then... just...”

Suddenly, I felt like the back of my head was hit with a hammer. It was a belated epiphany but if I was designing this with blue orichalcum as the material, wouldn’t I need blue orichalcum to make the item?

‘I’m screwed.’

A level 200 boss monster dropped the material, while I was only level -3. I could buy it from other people, but that wasn’t easy because the supply was small and the price was huge. It meant the design I made could become obsolete!

“Cancel! Skill cancel! Clear everything!!”

[The completion of the blueprint has already destroyed one of the available creation skill users. Even if you cancel the skill now, the number of times it can be used won't be restored. Do you still want to cancel it?]

“...No.”

This was bad. It was a mistake in my thinking. It was a skill that should be used carefully after thorough investigation and thinking.

[Please name the item.]

“Uhh... shit...”

[Have you decided on ‘Uhhshit?’]

“What nonsense are you saying? Please wait! Geez, what is this?”

I didn't worry about it for too long.

“Failure.”

[Have you decided on ‘Failure?’]

“Yes.”

Yes, it was a failure that shouldn't have been created in the first place. I was saddened at the number of times I could use the skill decreasing, but a hologram of the items was listed in the drafts.

[Failure]

Rating: Unique ~ Legendary

Unique Rating Information:

Durability: 699/699

Attack Power: 733~1,621 Defense: 50

* Agility +30

* There is a low probability of blocking the enemy's attacks.

* There is a certain probability of activating the '5 Joint Attacks' skill.

* There is a high probability of activating the 'Cutting' skill.

* There will be a fear effect if the enemy is more than 20 levels lower than the user.

* Attack power +20% in dark places.

Legendary Rating Information:

Durability: 1,090/1,090

Attack Power: 874~1,820 Defense: 80

* Agility +50

* There is a low probability of blocking the enemy's attacks.

* There is a certain probability of activating the '5 Joint Attack' skill.

* There is a high probability of activating the 'Cutting' skill.

* The skill 'Bisect' will be created.

* There will be a fear effect if the enemy is more than 20 levels lower than the user.

* Attack power +20% in dark places.

It is designed by a legendary blacksmith. It is a greatsword, but its cutting ability is excellent because of its unique shape. It resembles the predator of the sea, a shark, and gives fear to the enemies. The small blades spiking from the sword will increase the defense.

Blue orichalcum is used as a material. Its lightness means the attack speed doesn't fall. Due to the nature of the blue orichalcum, it becomes stronger in the dark.

User Restriction: Level 300 or higher. More than 5,000 strength.

Advanced Sword Mastery level 8 or higher.

Weight: 550

"...Hiccup!"

Amazing. It was a master weapon, not a failure. A one of a kind item in this world. And I was the one who created this item. I couldn't believe it.

"Isn't this huge?"

The words automatically emerged from my stunned mouth. Yes, I could be rich. If I went into more debt and bought blue orichalcum, I could make 'Failure' and put it on the trading site. Then the price of the item would skyrocket. Then I could pay all my debts and still have a lot of money left!

Truly a legendary blacksmith! It was literally the goose that laid the golden egg.

"...Uh?"

Then that feeling sank as I read the stats and options of the completed 'Failure'. I checked the usage conditions attached at the end.

"It needs level 300?"

Two days ago, I heard that the level of the first ranked person on the unified rankings was estimated to be around 250.

"Then 300?"

That wasn't the only problem.

"5,000 strength?!"

10 stat points were gained with every level. Even if a person invested all of their points

into strength for every level up, it would be almost impossible to have 5,000 strength at level 300, even with titles and equipment that raised their stats.

‘There are classes that receive extra strength, but it isn’t common. In the first place, who would be idiotic enough to invest all of their points in strength?’

Finally, there was the Advanced Sword Mastery level 8. Currently, the first ranked blacksmith had intermediate level skills. I couldn’t predict how long it would take for people to get Advanced Sword Master level 8.

Even if I managed to make ‘Failure’, nobody would be able to use it in the near future. This meant that selling it was impossible. My dream of making a fortune was shattered in an instant. As the name suggested, ‘Failure’ was a failure.

“...Then that’s it. There is no springtime in my life. Shit.”

I was frustrated but quickly corrected my mindset. Then I tried to deduce why such exorbitant usage conditions were attached to the item I created. It wasn’t difficult to come to a conclusion.

‘It was a mistake to try and make it unconditionally good.’

The development team of Satisfy had caught the hearts of the world, so they wouldn’t be that easy. ‘Failure’ wasn’t an item that could be acquired randomly through hunting or a raid. It was a production item that could be produced indefinitely if there were enough materials. It was likely that the system placed restrictions on the game items in order to maintain the game balance. Those restrictions were in the usage conditions.

‘An acceptable performance. Isn’t this the most important thing about the creative skills?’

The creation skill had a limited number of uses. It had to be used with care. I decided to seal the creation skill. If I created and sold superior items that didn’t destroy the balance, I would be able to earn a lot of money quickly and pay off my debt. However, I didn’t want to rush it.

I wanted to see it as the ultimate weapon to use for myself before encountering a difficult quest or a strong enemy.

‘The creation skill is for me. If I am in a crisis situation, I can create an item that can break through the situation.’

As a simple example, if I encountered a boss monster capable of causing tremendous fire damage, I could create and build an item that greatly increased my fire resistance properties before the raid.

If I didn’t create items for sale, I didn’t have to worry about the usage conditions. One of the biggest advantages of Pagma’s Descendant was that there was no restriction on the items I could wear. If I created items with a fraudulent power like ‘Failure’, I could show the highest power among existing items, even if the penalty was attached.

After I cleared my mind, I checked how to make ‘Failure.’ The materials were also a problem. In order to produce ‘Failure’, I needed a huge supply 15 blue orichalcum ore.

‘Even the handle is made with blue orichalcum... It was a mistake to choose only blue orichalcum as the material. If I used other materials as well, the number of blue orichalcum ore required would be reduced.’

I saw Failure’s tremendous options, so I was filled with the desire to produce and use it right away. If I could get my hands on Failure, I would be able to demonstrate a fearful combat power. But it was impossible to obtain blue orichalcum.

‘Let’s get rid of this vain regret. No, wait. Can I participate in the Guardian of the Forest raid party? The person recruiting party members said that level was irrelevant.’

I remembered the Guardian of the Forest raid party and headed back to the center of the square. Then I walked up to the black man with the ID ‘Toban’.

“I would like to participate in the raid.”

CHAPTER 12

If not now, I didn't know when I would be able to join a Guardian of the Forest raid party in the future.

"Please let me join the party."

I would join the party, survive until the Guardian of the Forest died and pick up all the blue orichalcum that dropped. It didn't matter if the other party members died.

'Anyway, my experience can't drop if I die!'

If I were really unlucky, then I might drop Mamon's Greatsword or Mengel's Plate Armor, which made up my entire fortune. But if I took the risk, I might be able to obtain blue orichalcum. I expressed my strong emotions when I gazed at Toban.

Was I too brazen? Did I have any sense of shame? I looked up to see Toban looking at me with a perplexed expression.

"What is your level?"

"What? Didn't you say that level and class doesn't matter?"

"I did say that at first, but... unexpected party members arrived, so I am now looking for those who are over level 120, preferably those with divine magic or magician professions. As you may know, the Guardian of the Forest is a monster whose body is made of minerals, so physical attacks won't work on it."

Toban stared at my greatsword with an unconvinced look, a gaze that strongly conveyed that he didn't want to accept me into the party.

'Then this guy shouldn't have said that he would take any level or class.'

Should I give up? No, I couldn't give up when thinking about the blue orichalcum. I would join the party no matter what.

"Please accept me. I won't hold you back."

“What is your level?”

I was currently level -3, but due to Mamon’s Greatsword and Mengel’s Plate Armor, my actual combat ability was above level 30. If I confessed that I was level 30... I would be kicked out straight away.

“30... no, minus... no, plus 100.”

“30 minus, plus 100?”

“No ~ no. Just 100.”

I was currently level -3, but I would’ve been close to level 100 if it weren’t for Ashur’s quest. Let’s try it once. When I actually entered the party, I didn’t intend to fight. Instead, I would follow like I was a dead mouse.

‘If I’m careful, they won’t notice that I deceived them about my level.’

Toban had a worried expression on his face.

“Your weapon is a greatsword? Isn’t it around level 65? Even if your item has an epic rating, claiming to be level 100... Are you really level 100?”

“Of course I am. My Mamon’s Greatsword has been strengthened to +5, so I can still use it.”

My face was still. I was just bluffing. I exploited the fact that items enhanced below +5 wouldn’t have a change in appearance, so I lied that the +0 Mamon’s Greatsword was actually +5.

But Toban wasn’t easy to pass.

“Even if Mamon’s Greatsword is +5, to still use it at level 100 is... In addition, your armor isn’t as good as the equipment that level 100 users can wear. Besides, where are your boots, gauntlets, and accessories?”

It was accurate. Mengel’s Plate Armor, which I was currently wearing, was only level 60. My helmet, boots, gauntlets, and accessories were all lost by the end of the three months quest...

‘Items that are like my blood...’

In the case of the boots and gauntlets, they were destroyed because I didn’t manage the durability. I managed the durability of my helmet and accessories, but it was unfortunate that I dropped them when I died.

As I recalled the hellish past, Toban looked at me suspiciously.

I said, “The only people who don’t need armor and accessories are those with excellent control over their weapons, like me. In fact, I remove this armor whenever I hunt. I only arm myself with the greatsword on hunts.”

Control was a word that didn’t apply to me, as I drank potions like I drank water whenever I hunted. When I watched the hunters on TV, I saw them exquisitely take advantage of the monsters’ gaps, firing off powerful skills as they avoided the attacks of monsters. Meanwhile, I just took random potshots and drank potions whenever my health was low. That was my hunting method.

But right now, I needed to bluff to enter the raid party. Therefore, I quoted the remark I heard about control. However, that was a big mistake. Toban’s body was fully armed with heavy armor and a shield.

“Hoh... so people who wear armor aren’t skilled?”

He was smiling, but his eyes were cold. He was seriously angry. The problem was that the other party members around were also filled with righteous indignation.

“You make it sound like wearing armor and accessories is a bad thing.”

“Listen to him; He never wears armor.”

“Those who wear armor and accessories aren’t authentic? If we don’t want to be ignored, we should take it off...”

I tried to calm down the angry people who were talking sarcastically, “That’s too much. I didn’t mean anything bad, I was just explaining why I am less dependent on defense.”

“Anyway, that means that I shouldn’t be armed! Your level is lower than mine!”

A wild-looking, hairy middle-aged person interrupted with a shout. He was equipped

with two shining axes, armor and gorgeous ornaments, looking completely like a high-level user. He looked angrier than all the others.

“Grid? This is the first time I’ve seen you. You, have you done any hunting at the hunting grounds around here? I know how powerful the monsters in this area are. You sure must be confident if you’re bragging about hunting them without armor.”

The other party members nodded.

“Based on his words, he must be a newbie to this area.”

“Have you ever seen someone called Grid?”

“I’ve never seen him at a nearby hunting ground. How about you?”

“Honestly, it sounds like crap... I think he is actually lower than level 100.”

“Looking at him now, it seems like he died and dropped his items on a lone hunt. Maybe his intentions to enter the party are impure. He already has nothing to lose so...”

The atmosphere was getting worse.

‘Sharp people... What now? Should I give up on the party?’

As I was feeling confused... A blond haired man with his upper body revealed appeared and intervened.

“Everybody stop.”

The party members became excited at the man’s appearance.

“First place in the martial artist rankings, Regas.”

“The equipment items requirements are so severe that raising the level is difficult, yet he is already over level 180.”

“His nickname is Taekwon Master, Taekwon Master. Is it true that a mob will melt when hit by his fists?”

“Wow~! He really came! I did well to join this party! Martial artists ignore defense to attack the weak point. Can’t this technique inflict huge damage to the Guardian of the Forest?”

Regas caught my eye and approached me. “A greatsword is very slow and has wide movements, so it isn’t easy to take evasive actions during battle. Therefore, it is amazing that you are hunting without wearing armor.”

Regas was good looking, slim, and had ideal muscles. Due to the nature of his class, he was popular with women because he didn’t wear any tops. In fact, when I looked closer at him, I saw that he was, in fact, very handsome. I felt like a squid standing next to him.

I instinctively hated handsome people so I replied bluntly, “It isn’t a big deal.”

“Hoh, it isn’t a big deal... My expectations about your skills have increased. I would love to directly see your amazing abilities.”

Regas said to the others, “This guy will also join the party. Originally, it was a party that had no limits on class or level. Some of the party members are below level 90, so I don’t think there’s a problem in accepting one more level 100 user.”

“But...”

People still responded poorly, so Regas added,

“As you know, only level 170 or higher users can hit the Guardian of the Forest properly. Nevertheless, the reason why I gathered as many people as possible without a level limit is that people are needed to mark the golems constantly summoned by the Guardian of the Forest. The Guardian of the Forest will be dealt with by my 17 guild members, including Toban and Vantner. We want people to tie up the feet of the crystal golems while we focus on the Guardian of the Forest. I think that Grid’s skills are sufficient for our wishes.”

“.....”

“He wants to join the party, so I don’t know why we should refuse. I can understand you doubting his actions, but why do you doubt people beforehand?”

The remarks of a strong person were reputable. Once Regas spoke, the party members

had an atmosphere like they would accept me into the party. But they had impure intentions.

“Let’s see how well his control is.”

“Watch him fighting... We will see if he’s a braggart or not.”

“He said that he fights with his armor off? Then he can’t wear his armor on this raid.”

“I will watch him closely.”

A party filled with intense hostility! This wasn’t a Guardian of the Forest raid party, but a Grid raid party.

‘I can’t join this party.’

If I joined the party now, I would have to fight in front of them. As a level -3 player, I would surely die quickly and not even see the Guardian of the Forest, let alone see the blue orichalcum. It would also come with extra embarrassment involved.

“It’s okay. I won’t join the party.” I stepped back, causing the middle-aged man to laugh.

“Were you just bluffing?”

An attitude that ignored people! But I didn’t get angry because his words were true.

I replied coldly, “It isn’t a good idea to join a party with people who don’t trust me.”

Originally, party members should be able to trust each other with their backs. However, everyone here doubted me. The party members were forced to accept my words.

“Well... that is true.”

“Come to think of it, we were so excited that we drove him to the other end.”

“I agree. I didn’t know if it was the truth, so I should’ve just stayed silent.”

“That’s right. Actually, weren’t we the ones who committed the sin? I feel bad now.”

I didn't hold onto the party members any longer and left this place. Regas followed me.

"What is it?"

My attitude was cold, but Regas just asked for a handshake with a gentle smile.

"I hope to see you again next time, Greatsword warrior who doesn't use armor. As a person who walks along the path of a martial artist, I am very interested in you."

I didn't doubt that he was interested in me. I didn't think it was a bluff as I gazed into his honest eyes.

I shook hands with him and thought, 'Why is he so naive?'

He was a good person. If I had a chance someday, I would make him a friend that I could borrow money from.

"Then I'll see you again."

Take money from him later... no, I owed him. Therefore, I said goodbye to Regas with a big smile headed straight to the smithy.

CHAPTER 13

I only had 3 gold and 11 silver. I had to make items and sell them to people in order to earn enough to use the carriage. Once I saved up enough money, I could buy some blue orichalcum ore and make 'Failure.' However, saving money was as hard as plucking the stars from the night skies.

"Eh?"

The moment I set foot in the smithy,

[The effect of mastering 'Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill' is activated. Blacksmith NPCs with craftsmanship skill beyond the intermediate level will treat you in a friendly manner.

[Pagma's Descendant' class effect is activated. Blacksmith NPCs with advanced level craftsmanship skills will recognize and worship you.]

This was a hidden feature? It meant I could readily obtain the desired production methods from blacksmiths.

"Wow."

The Pagma's Descendant class, the most I experienced it, the more I liked it. At first, I disliked it because it was a production class. However, it truly was a legendary class. I joyfully entered the smithy and found a blacksmith sweating in front of a hearth.

"I want to make and sell the most profitable item with the greatest demand. What is that item? Please give me a recommendation."

I smiled brightly.

'I am Pagma's Descendant, someone who has mastered the Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill. Feel appreciation towards me, worship me, and hand over the appropriate crafting method!'

But the next development went against my expectations. Instead of the worshipping, the blacksmith gazed at me with cold eyes.

“Bah, a kid wants to talk about this subject. I don’t want to talk to a rude and incompetent person like you, so get out.”

“.....?”

This was an ordinary NPC’s attitude towards level 1 users.

‘He didn’t recognize me?’

An intermediate or advanced blacksmith would instantly recognize me, but the blacksmith here didn’t know me. It meant that he was a low level blacksmith who hadn’t even reached the intermediate level.

‘Ah, you. I met a lousy person.’

I wanted to go to another blacksmith, but this was the only smithy in the village. I expected this to be easy due to the notification window, but it was in vain.

‘I forgot how unlucky I was. Dammit.’

It couldn’t be helped. I hurriedly changed my attitude and respectfully spoke to the blacksmith, “You were so passionate about your work that I was afraid to disturb your concentration. Therefore, I wanted to quickly get to the point. Did I sound rude? If so, please forgive me.”

“Huh, I see. You have learned strange manners.”

The blacksmith looked at me with interest. I stood as politely as possible, like a man engaged in a service job.

“I am Grid. I would like to learn how to make items.”

The blacksmith snorted. “Bah, do you think anyone can learn how to make items? A child like you should start from firewood. No, not even. If you sincerely want to learn how to make items from me, you should go to the backyard and obtain firewood. You should be thankful that I am letting you do this.”

“...How expected from a lowly blacksmith.”

“Huh? Did you say something just now?”

“No?”

I was the one feeling regret now. The only person I could depend on in this village was a lowly blacksmith. If I was kicked out from here without learning how to make items, I would have to save money while doing restaurant chores or working in the fields until I gathered enough for the carriage.

“I’ll chop the firewood. How much do I need?”

The blacksmith gave me an old axe and said, “As much as you can.”

[Chop Firewood]

Difficulty: E

Blacksmith Smith has given you an errand to chop firewood. If you can finish this task well, Smith will look upon you in a more favorable light.

Quest Clear Conditions: 500 pieces of firewood.

Quest Reward: Affinity with Smith +10, experience +10, 20 bronze.

Quest Failure: Affinity with Smith -10.

‘Wow, it’s a normal quest window this time.’

After starting Ashur’s quest, I only received S-grade or SS-grade quests, so receiving a normal quest felt like my mind was cleansed.

‘I need 20 experience until my next level up... If I complete this quest, my experience bar will fill up by half.’

There was no change in the amount of experience needed to level up from -3 or -1. The amount of experience needed for minus levels seemed to be 20 points. In other words, at the minus level, I could raise my level just by doing these miscellaneous

quests.

‘First of all, I need to escape from the minus level.’

I thought positive thoughts and headed to the backyard with the axe. After checking the trees piled up on one side, I looked at the axe in my hand. It was an old axe. Could this old axe be used to chop firewood?

‘Rather, I’m worried that the axe will be shattered upon hitting the tree... He might be angry if I break his axe, so I have to be careful...’

I decided to use the ‘Legendary Blacksmith’s Appraisal’ skill on the old axe.

“Appraisal.”

[The blacksmith who becomes a legend that appraises items with an excellent discerning eye. If a hidden feature exists in the target item, it will be found.]

[Smith’s Old Axe]

Rating: Normal

Durability: 6/6 Attack Power: 4~7

An axe that the blacksmith Smith has used since he was young. It was well made and is very old, but still cuts well. The durability is weak so there is a danger that it will be destroyed.

Weight: 40

[No hidden functions exist.]

It was an ordinary axe, save for the fact that it was very old. I felt relief, rather than disappointment, that the item didn’t have a hidden function. I had gone through so many incidents lately that I missed ordinary things.

[You have grasped the materials that make up Smith’s Old Axe, the production method, and the intentions of its creator.]

[Your understanding of Smith's Old Axe is now at 100%. You can use Smith's Old Axe perfectly.]

[You have learned how to make an axe.]

Thanks to his passive skill, he perfectly understood the item and new notification windows popped up.

"I got 100% understanding straight away."

It seemed that items with low ratings could reach the maximum understanding just by using Appraisal on them. Indeed, it would be funny if a legendary blacksmith looked at a normal axe and couldn't understand its production method.

"There are no conditions of use, so I don't think an increased understanding is useful. The advantage is that the axe production method is gained."

A penalty would occur if I equipped an item that I didn't meet the conditions of. The 'understanding' of an item was just a skill that played a role in reducing the penalty. Smith's Old Axe was an item that didn't have a usage penalty, so there were no advantages to the 100% understanding, except for the addition of the production method.

I didn't feel much inspiration, but I placed the axe to one side and set up a log. I thought about spitting into my hands and rubbing them together, like the old man in historical dramas.

"There is no need for physical power when chopping firewood. I just need to go along the grain."

It was knowledge I picked up from somewhere, but I didn't know exactly what it meant by following the grain. It was simply knowledge that couldn't be applied. However, there was no need to worry. Couldn't I just cut the piece of wood like I would cut a monster with my greatsword?

"It is like using swordsmanship on a tree."

I picked up the axe I had put aside. The moment I was about to chop the log... A solid

black line was drawn near the center of the log.

“What is this?”

Strange. I watched it for a moment before putting the axe down, watching the black line disappear like it was a lie. I picked up the axe again. The black line soon reappeared. It felt like the axe was telling me to hit the black line.

“This is the effect of 100% understanding.”

It was a possible interpretation, but I couldn’t be sure. I avoided the black line and hit the middle of the log with the axe.

Beeok!

Although I struck down with all my might, the axe failed and stopped halfway through the log. Chopping it in one go had failed. A notification window popped up stating that the durability of the axe had decreased by one.

“T-This humiliation...”

I couldn’t even chop firewood... I was useless here as well! I felt frustrated as I barely managed to pull out the axe stuck in the log. Then I threw the half split piece of wood to the side and picked up a new log.

“This time...”

I gazed at the black line and swung the axe.

Ttaak!

The moment the axe touched the solid line, a light sound was made and an exhilarating feeling could be felt. The log was split in half without any resistance.

“Ohh!!”

I was forced to admire the effect of understanding the item, finally realizing the importance of understanding.

“This is what it meant by handling the item perfectly. The benefit of increasing item

understanding isn't just reducing the penalties or learning how to make the item.'

There was an expression about treating items as another limb. If I raised a sword's understanding to 100%, I could use that sword like it was my own limb. Item understanding could be thought to have the same type of concept as Weapons Mastery.

'If I raise the understanding of items I created to 100%...'

Invincible! I had played the game for over a year, but now there was the possibility of entering the rankings!

"Okay, earn money quickly and pay off my debt! Then I will become a ranker with the power of items!"

Once I became a ranker, I would receive a staggering amount of requests from various media. I could become a rich person just from the TV performance fees. It came with bonus popularity and fame. No one could ignore me anymore and I would be able to gain the heart of my first love, Ahyoung!

My motivation shot upwards!

"Haaaah!! Hat! Hat! Hap!"

Ttaak! Ttaak! Ttaak! Ttadadak~!

I didn't rest as I chopped firewood for two hours. I couldn't stop because the feeling of success was so thrilling. But the pleasure only lasted for a while. As my level was -3, my poor stamina quickly ran out my sense of hunger came quickly after.

I started getting tired at around the 150th piece of firewood, my breathing became arduous and pained.

'Should I take a break and rest?'

No, I wouldn't.

The three months I spent on Ashur's quest was exceptionally painful and difficult, but I pressed on without giving up. I had experienced such a thing, so I couldn't take a break while chopping firewood. This exhaustion was nothing compared to everything

I experienced before.

‘This isn’t hard work. Don’t rest. Finish quickly and proceed to the next quest. I will level up and make money.’

I grit my teeth and kept on chopping the firewood.

CHAPTER 14

Once I finished my 280th piece of firewood, my hunger became worse and I started to become dizzy. However, I didn't stop.

'I wouldn't be me if I gave up at this point.'

Since childhood, I had never been good at anything. I wasn't smart, wasn't handsome, and my personality wasn't good. I wasn't even good at sports or exercising. I didn't have a special talent in a single field.

I had no abilities, felt severe jealousy towards others, and made excuses...

I couldn't deny that I was a bad representation of the human race. However, the reason I was able to build amicable relationships in high school was through my persistence.

I wasn't very smart. I needed to study several times more than others just to maintain a normal grade. My personality was bad. I often put on a charade that was just as good as the politicians. I wasn't good at exercising. During PE, I was able to play soccer with others because I tried diligently.

I knew this about myself, so I tried. I did my best to not give up. Thanks to my persistence, I was able to go to university and make it safely through the army. I might be debt-ridden because of Satisfy, but I barely managed to maintain an ordinary life.

Anyway, persistence was my strong point.

"Level... money..."

I was caught by this obsession and didn't stop moving my axe. I had just chopped the 460th piece of firewood when suddenly, a notification window popped up.

[Persistence stat has been opened.]

"Eh?"

Surprisingly, it was a new stat. I immediately checked the stat.

[Persistence]

You never give up, even in the face of a difficult task. You won't get tired easily. The possessions weight limit has increased. The feeling of satiation will last for a long time.

* The higher the number, the higher the effect.

* Stat points can't be distributed to this stat.

* Every time 10 points are gained in this stat, the 'Indomitable' stat will increase by 1 point.

"Wow!"

I wouldn't tire easily, my weight limit would increase, and satiety would last for a long time! It was truly fantastic. Furthermore, my indomitable stat would go up by one with every 10 points in persistence?

'I have to be persistent to raise this stat?'

I felt some doubt as I returned to chopping the firewood.

'I showed a lot more persistence when completing Ashur's quest... why wasn't the persistence stat created until now?'

I could only think of it as the difference between a normal rank class and a legendary rank class.

'It might be the same actions and same effort, but the stat growth rate of a legendary class is higher than a normal class.'

Once I discovered the new benefits of the legendary class, I forgot all of my fatigue and started to chop the firewood with more determination.

Ttaak! Ttaak!

As the number of firewood increased, I developed the knack of hitting the firewood.

Despite hitting along the grain, the durability of the axe decreased by one point every 200 pieces of firewood. However, at a certain point, it no longer decreased and the speed of my chopping accelerated.

By the time I finished 1,000 pieces of firewood, I had four points in the persistence stat.

[You haven't consumed food in a long time, so all stats have dropped by half. It is easier to become affected by an abnormal state. If you continue to starve, your health will gradually decline.]

It was a close call. I was lying breathless on the ground.

"Pant pant..."

My knees were weak and my arms were heavy. My whole body was screaming in pain, making it hard to move. Despite the compensation from the persistence stat, my -3 level stamina was still poor.

I had chopped firewood for only six hours, but I was exhausted. I ate the bread and water that I took out of my inventory and looked towards the east where the Grey Forest was located.

'The raid party should've arrived at the Guardian of the Forest by now. It is good that I didn't join the party... I would've been disgraced if I joined.'

With my -3 level stamina, I wouldn't even have been able to follow the movement speed of the other party members. How embarrassing would it have been if I died from exhaustion, not by a monster? I shook my head as I recalled my premature attempt to join the party.

'When I think about it, I don't even know the drop rate of blue orichalcum. My thinking was too simple when I tried to join the party. I should think and act more carefully.'

It felt like I had a small amount of mental growth.

After a while, I barely recovered and returned to Smith's smithy.

"I finished chopping the firewood. I did as much as possible and managed to obtain 1,000 pieces."

"What?" Smith burst out, "Puhahahahat! A newbie like you chopped 1,000 pieces of firewood in six hours? You aren't just a newbie, but a liar as well! Are you trying to deceive me?"

He laughed like it was funny and glared at me.

'Is this person bipolar?'

I pointed towards Smith's backyard. "Isn't it too much to lie that I chopped 1,000 firewood in six hours? If you don't believe me, why don't you go and check it directly?"

"You don't have to tell me that. If you cheat me, I'll kick you out of here straight away."

I followed Smith towards the backyard. After a few moments... Smith's mouth dropped open as he saw the 1,000 firewood piled up on one side.

"H-How is this possible...? How can someone like you cut 1,000 pieces of firewood so quickly? They're also perfect...! No, the amount of time isn't the problem. You don't have the stamina to chop 1,000 pieces of firewood! Tell me honestly! Where did all this firewood come from? Did it come from Vans carpenter store? Or did you buy it from the woodcutter who lives in the mountains? Foolish guy! I asked you to chop the firewood yourself!"

"What? Why are you framing someone? These are my own logs of firewood!"

"Ridiculous! It can't be!"

Was this person senile? Why didn't he believe me? I picked up the axe. Smith flinched and stepped back as he saw it in my hands. I set up a log.

Ttaack!

My woodcutting technique had reached the peak after chopping 1,000 logs of firewood. As soon as the axe met the wood, a clear sound was heard. It was a thrilling sound that rang through the smithy.

Smith marveled at the sound and then looked surprised when he saw the log split neatly in two. After staring blankly, he nodded and opened his mouth, "I thought you were an ordinary newbie, but you've actually worked for a long time in woodworking."

"No."

"Then, you're a woodcutter."

"No." I reached out a hand towards Smith, who was talking nonsense. "First, give me the compensation."

"Umm... Yes. The work is better than I expected, so I will give you more compensation than I promised..."

Doubt could still be seen in Smith's eyes, but he pulled out 40 coins. At that moment, the quest completion notification window stated that I received 15 experience points. The way that Smith gazed at me also changed considerably. Before, he had looked at me like a cockroach, and now I was like a mutt on the streets?

I was proud. I had felt helpless in the successive S and SS-grade quests, so completing a normal quest after a long time gave me a sense of accomplishment. As I was bathing in the afterglow, Smith gave me a pickaxe.

"If you climb the mountain, there will be a mine. Gather iron ore from there!"

"How much?"

"As much as possible!"

[Mine Iron Ore]

Difficulty: E

Blacksmith Smith is suspicious of you.

He keeps looking and looking, but Smith can't understand why you are better at chopping firewood than him.

Smith has greatly increased the difficulty of the task in order to assess you properly.

Quest Clear Conditions: 80 pieces of iron ore.

Quest Reward: Affinity with Smith +30, experience +55, 20 bronze.

Quest Failure: Affinity with Smith -30.

55 experience! If I cleared the quest, I would go up three levels at once and finally get rid of the minus level. I was happy.

No, wait. 'Other people start at level 1, while I'm glad about reaching level 0...'

I felt strange as I accepted the quest.

"I'm going now."

I placed strength in the hand holding the pickaxe. I had a huge passive skill that was understanding items. If I took advantage of this, the mining job would be done without difficulty. I left the smithy without delay. As I headed to a small mountain in the back of the village, I asked a child passing by.

"Kid, do any monsters emerge on that mountain?"

Was he eight years old? The kid with the runny nose shrugged and replied, "Are you really asking that question? How can there be monsters on a mountain attached to the village? My dad says that the lord's soldiers patrol this area for our safety. So you don't have to be a shivering coward, Traveler."

"C-Coward? Me?"

The spiteful expression and nasty tone! A nasty kid who provoked the urge to punish him. As I prepared to rub my fist on the child's head, I saw a big man, probably the child's father, approaching. The man looked between me and the boy with a disapproving expression.

"Boy, why are you hanging around that traveler? He looks stupid, so don't associate with him!"

"Yes. I only replied to him because he looked so pathetic and frustrated."

“Huhu, my son had to go through a lot of trouble. By the way, how did a traveler like that come to our village? Our village isn’t a place that lazy people can enter.”

“That’s right. But he asked me a question and I didn’t want to be rude.”

“Hahahat! Yes yes. Then let’s go to eat. Your mother is waiting.”

“Yes Father!”

The father and kid walked away. Dammit, now I was being ignored by a kid.

“It is too much.”

The NPCs’ attitude towards me was disturbing. During the level 1-10 beginner days, the NPCs didn’t show a favourable opinion towards users, but they still taught us and helped us grow. However, they unconditionally ignored me now that I was a minus level. They felt irritated just making eye contact with me.

My reputation might’ve increased by 500 in exchange for discovering Pagma’s Rare Book, as well as the dignity stat after changing classes, but the minus level itself seemed to have the worst affinity with NPCs.

‘Then Doran was a really nice person.’

I preferred a NPC like Doran, who mistook me for a high level. He forced me to accept the quest, but at least he didn’t ignore me.

‘When I think of Doran, I’m reminded of Doran’s ring.’

I still mourned the thought of the loss of Doran’s ring.

I gazed at the sky for a moment and soothed my mind. I checked my status window before moving to the mountains.

CHAPTER 15

Name: Grid

Level: -3 (15/20)

Class: Pagma's Descendant

- * The probability of adding additional options when making items will increase.
- * The probably of item enhancement will increase.
- * All equipment items can be worn unconditionally. However, there is a penalty depending on the rating of the item.

Title: One who Became a Legend

- * Abnormal conditions don't work well on you.
- * You won't die when health is at the minimum.
- * Easily acknowledged.

Health: 34/34 Mana: 3/3

Strength: 1 + 5 Stamina: 1 Agility: 1 Intelligence: 1

Dexterity: 1 Persistence: 4

Composure: 1 Indomitable: 1 Dignity: 1 Insight: 1

Stat Points: 0

Weight: 3,075/200

- * The weight limit exceeds 200%, so movement speed is reduced by 100%.

The body is heavy and cannot exert any power properly.

The probability of receiving the 'weakened' state has become really high.

'It will take a while to climb the mountain with this slow pace.'

My pace was too slow, despite accelerating at full speed. I wanted to leave all of the items at the warehouse. But there was nothing free in this world. In order to use the warehouse, I had to pay a considerable amount of money.

‘I can’t afford to spend my money on a warehouse when I am desperately needing a carriage.’

Money was money, but there was also the expectation that the act of enduring the ‘slow pace’ would have an impact on my persistence stat.

“Okay, let’s just go.”

I headed towards the mountain at a slow pace. The distance between the smithy and the mountain wasn’t far. Would it take around 30 minutes with the average speed of an adult male? But my movement speed fell by a huge 100%! It took me one hour to arrive at the base of the mountain.

“Phew.”

I was tired, despite walking even more slowly than others. It was amazing how creatures like turtles and slugs could live with their slow movement speed. After three hours,

“Pant pant...”

I was barely able to climb to the middle of the mountain. The mountain path was well constructed and the slope wasn’t steep, but it took me this long to arrive at the end of the path. It was now dark.

“I just need to go a little further...”

The light from the entrance of the mine wasn’t far away, but it wasn’t easy to reach. My poor stamina was already depleted.

“Shit...”

I didn’t want to delay arriving at my destination.

I barely suppressed my desire to rest and struggled to move on. One step, another step, each step was filled with a heavy weight. It felt like I was walking in deep water while

wearing thick cotton clothes. But I went forward.

The moment I arrived at the mine!

[Your persistence has risen.]

“As I expected!”

I laughed as I looked at my rising stat. It felt like I recovered from my tired spirit instantly. While I couldn't raise these stats through leveling up, the ones that grew through certain behaviors gave me a tremendous sense of accomplishment and pleasure, like a drug. It seemed like I would never be able to stop grinding stats for the rest of my life.

I entered the mine and literally sat down with joy. I took a break and consumed bread and water, then my stamina slowly recovered.

“Then shall I start? Appraisal.”

After judging that I had rested enough, I took out the pickaxe and used the Legendary Blacksmith's Appraisal skill.

[Smith's Pickaxe]

Rating: Normal

Durability: 19/19 Attack Power: 7~9

A pickaxe used by the blacksmith, Smith. It was used by Smith to build up his skills.

Thanks to the strong durability, Smith collected 120 iron ore in a single day with this pickaxe. Since that day, the miners in this village have acknowledged Smith.

Weight: 40

[A hidden function doesn't exist.]

[You have grasped the materials that make up Smith's Pickaxe, the production method, and the intentions of its creator.]

[Your understanding of Smith's Pickaxe is now at 100%. You can use Smith's Pickaxe perfectly.]

[You have learned how to make a pickaxe.]

I received a great stimulus after reading the description of the pickaxe.

'T-That old man mined 120 iron ores in one day?'

I received a quest to mine 80 iron ores. There was no time limit. Yes, it would take a few days to gather the 80 iron ores needed to complete the quest. But I couldn't relax after finding out that Smith obtained 120 iron ores in one day.

'I am going to obtain 200 pieces in one day and then make that old man recognize me!'

I looked around the mine with the pickaxe in my hand. Red dots glittered all over the walls.

'I am supposed to hit those spots.'

As I moved to one red dot, the miners resting on the side discovered me.

"Hey Newbie, why are you holding a pickaxe in your hand? Surely you aren't trying to mine?"

"I am."

"What? Puhahahat!!"

The miners laughed. Some of them rolled across the floor with tears in their eyes. Another person frowned and said. "Cut it out. A newbie like you can swing all day and not even obtain a single iron ore."

The others agreed.

"You should be glad if you don't break your wrist."

"We are saying this because we are worried, so just go home. New. Bie."

‘Yes, laugh now.’

I didn’t respond to them. I would show them with my actions!

Kaaang! Kaaang!

[Iron ore has been acquired.]

The iron ore emerged after I hit the red dot three or four times. The miners were amazed at the sight.

“Ah, no? How can he do it so easily...?”

“Hey, it’s just a coincidence.”

Kaaang! Kaaang!

[Iron ore has been acquired.]

“Wow...”

“What, that guy? Why is he so good when he looks so incompetent?”

“Fools. That isn’t his skill. The pickaxe is special.”

One of the whispering miners approached me before reaching out and saying,

“That pickaxe, can I try it?”

Did they think I was mining using the power of an item because they couldn’t recognize my skills? I wanted to see the expressions of the miners change when they realize that my pickaxe was ordinary. So I handed the pickaxe to the miner.

“Look carefully. I’ll prove that this pickaxe isn’t an ordinary one.” The miner declared and wielded the pickaxe with confidence.

Kakang! Kakakang! Kang! Kaaang! Kang!

“Pant pant... it’s just an ordinary pickaxe...”

The minor said awkwardly after repeating the swing of the pickaxe many times and only obtaining one iron ore. The miners who saw it were agitated.

“Then he is good at mining...”

“We shouldn’t judge people by their appearance. Anyway, it’s time for us to leave. Let’s head down.”

The miners ignored me and left the mine. They didn’t apologize for their mistake and or acknowledge my skills.

Anyway, I started the full-scale mining work.

[Iron ore has been acquired.]

“It’s really easy.”

The 100% understanding corrected my pickaxe swinging posture and accurately pinpointed the position I needed to hit. It felt like I could gather 200~300 iron ores. But that confidence only lasted a short moment. I became exhausted after a while. The act of hitting a wall in a semi-enclosed space consumed more stamina than chopping firewood.

“Pant pant... this damned...”

My breathing worsened when I obtained the 26th iron ore. My waist and arms started twitching. My level -3 body was screaming at me to take a break. But I couldn’t rest. It was because my desire to raise my level quickly was greater than my desire to rest.

After adjusting my breathing, I straightened my posture and swung the pickaxe again.

Kaaang! Kakang!

“Ugh...”

By the time I extracted the 41st iron ore, the sensations from my wrist and waist started to disappear. Sweat poured like rain down my body. My legs weakened by I persisted in swinging the pickaxe. I couldn't see the sky when I raised my head, only the stifling ceiling.

I wanted to rest. But I wanted to earn money by learning how to make items quickly. My hands trembled as I moved my pickaxe.

Kakang! Kajajak!

“Pant... pant... ah, I'm dying.”

Once it was the 59th piece of iron ore, my vision became blurry from fatigue. My muscles screamed. My shaking hands couldn't hold the pickaxe tightly. I soothed my hunger with bread and water and persisted.

This was my limit. Right now, I wanted to throw the pickaxe in my hand away. But I actually gripped the pickaxe tighter.

“I won't give up because of this. My job is labour! Uraaaaat!”

Kakang! Kakang! Kakakang!

I was debt-ridden because of the game; I was a loser in reality. One day, I heard from a friend that my high school alumni ignored me and ridiculed me. It was bitter because I knew that the friend who delivered the news had acted the same as the alumni.

My friends from the army and university? I hadn't been in touch with them for a long time. Ah, I was contacted four months ago by an army buddy. He was working for a multi-level (pyramid scheme) company and was willing to offer me a job. It was easy to see who disregarded me.

I didn't bother speaking to them to change their opinion.

If I told them that I was crazy about a game, they would just look at me like I was pathetic.

I was so embarrassed about my pathetic self that I couldn't go to the second reunion.

However, it was the only way to meet my first love, Ahyoung, so I attended an alumni meeting when I was on vacation from the army...

There was nothing pleasing about what happened. I was only able to forget about reality and find stability when I logged into Satisfy.

But that was a while ago. Now, Satisfy was no different from the real world. Even the NPCs were ignoring me! This wasn't the real world. I needed to grow as quickly as possible. I would raise my level, earn money and escape my debt. Then I would become a ranker. Then like Katz not long ago, I would be interviewed on TV.

I was Pagma's Descendant! The epic classes that made two billion users astonished? They were nothing in front of the legendary class!

"I will show the worldddd!!!"

Kaaang!

[Iron ore has been acquired.]

"I must succeed."

Due to the debt, I was doing labor work every day. Then I would tell all those who ignored me. I wouldn't ignore the abuse again. In fact, you lot weren't that great either!

My pickaxe moved again. My persistence stat steadily grew. As I became more and more familiar with the mining technique, the speed that the durability decreased slowed. Before I knew it, the bright morning sun shone. The miners who came to work were amazed to see me.

"Did that guy work all night?"

"Unlike how he looks, he has enormous stamina. No, how is his mental state still fine? What an amazing guy."

"Heok! Look at the amount of iron ore! Has he broken Smith's record?"

“Aish, how can he break Smith’s record? I honestly admit that he is doing well but... eh? Hey, hasn’t his mining skill improved overnight?”

During that day, I fell into a critical state several times and minimized the amount of time spent mining. I experienced dangerous situations and almost died several times while mining, but was able to pass the crisis and got 170 iron ore by lunch time.

Despite it being less than my target of 200 iron ores, I couldn’t continue any longer because my water ran out.

Stagger. Stagger stagger.

The miners watched as I left the mine with barely any strength left.

“This person, great... I have to admit it. I apologize for what I said yesterday and for ignoring you. Please forgive me for my rudeness.”

“You will surely be a great miner! No, with this great spirit, you will succeed in whatever you want to do!”

The miners who ignored me yesterday now acknowledged me. Being acknowledged by someone, it was a valuable experience that I only had a few times in my life. I was proud, even if the other people were NPCs.

I descended the mountain with lighter steps. Overnight, my persistence stat had risen to 16 points. My stamina also rose, so I was able to descend the mountain without becoming tired.

I dragged the heavy sack of iron ores towards the smithy. It felt like the gazes of the villages had significantly changed. The miners had spread my story through the village.

“Uh, I’m sorry for yesterday, Miner.”

The kid from yesterday had a complete 180-degree change in attitude as he apologized to me. His father also smiled at me.

My level was still minus. However, the attitude of the minors and people who ignored me suddenly changed in a day. It seemed that the ‘easily acknowledged’ characteristic of my title was applied.

‘I feel good...’

The world of Satisfy, which had grown similar to reality after I became a minus level, now felt like a haven again. I smiled and gave the boy a light pat. Shortly afterwards, I arrived at the smithy.

He already heard. Smith had a stunned expression as I handed him the bag containing 170 iron ore.

“How is it? Can you still call me a newbie?”

“Haha...” Smith checked the number and condition of the iron ores, then shook his head with a thrilled expression. “No, you’re a great person, not a newbie. You have great talent and will grow to be a great person by overcoming any hardships.”

Smith asked me for a handshake.

“Someone like you dreaming of becoming a blacksmith, all blacksmiths on the continent will rejoice. Thank you for giving me the glory of teaching you.”

I willingly shook hands with Smith.

Smith smiled warmly and continued, “You were very good. You also broke my mining record, which no one else has done. I will give you twice the promised reward.”

There was a notification information me of the quest’s success, then the rewards started coming in.

[Reputation in Bairan Village has increased by 200.]

[1 silver has been acquired.]

[Affinity with Smith has risen to 60.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[You are now level 1. Your stats, which were fixed to a minimum due to the minus level penalty, have been restored to their normal state.]

[The basic stats of Pagma's Descendant have been applied.]

Finally...

“This is the start.”

CHAPTER 16

[You are now level 1. Your stats, which were fixed to a minimum due to the minus level penalty, have been restored to their normal state.]

[The basic stats of Pagma's Descendant have been applied.]

These were phrases that made my heart pound in anticipation.

Dugun dugun!

My heart was beating so fast, it found like the sound was coming up to my ears. I was extremely excited and hurriedly opened the status window.

Name: Grid

Level: 1 (45/100)

Class: Pagma's Descendant

- * The probability of adding additional options when making items will increase.
- * The probably of item enhancement will increase.
- * All equipment items can be worn unconditionally. However, there will be a penalty depending on the rating of the item.

Title: One who Became a Legend

- * Abnormal conditions don't work well on you.
- * You won't die when health is at the minimum.
- * Easily acknowledged.

Health: 280/280 Mana: 75/75

Strength: 20 + 5 Stamina: 18 Agility: 12 Intelligence: 25

Dexterity: 50 Persistence: 16

Composure: 10 Indomitable: 11 Dignity: 10 Insight: 10

Stat Points: 40

Weight: 3,035/820

* The weight limit exceeds 200%, so movement speed is reduced by 100%.

The body is heavy and cannot exert any power properly.

The probability of receiving the 'weakened' state has become really high.

"A dream?"

Was it a dream? I didn't panic. If I were in reality, I would've pinched myself. However, I just calmly logged out of the game. I lay in the capsule in my room and stared for a few moments.

"I was sleeping without knowing it."

This was a good possibility because I didn't have the capsule switched to sleep mode. I went to the bathroom to resolve my bodily needs, poured cold water over my head, and returned to the capsule. I logged in again.

Just like in my dream, I was standing in the smithy.

"Was it not a dream...? No, I shouldn't anticipate anything."

If an unlucky person like me started expecting things, the wounds on my heart would also grow. I opened the status window without any inspiration and literally froze.

"...An amazing jackpot."

There were no changes to the contents of the status window. It wasn't a dream. My heart started beating quickly again.

"Wow..."

The basic stats of a level 1 character were 6 strength, 7 stamina, 4 agility, and 5 intelligence. In other words, the total number of stats for a level 1 character was 22

points.

However, the basic stats of Pagma's Descendant added up to 165 points in total. In addition, there were the 16 points in persistence that I grew as well as 1 point in indomitable, making a huge total of 182 points.

Using simple calculations, my stats were higher than level 15 users, which meant that I had an overwhelming advantage. I realized the greatness of a legendary profession.

Besides...

'These are just the basic stats but...'

I paid attention to the extra 40 stat points I had.

'Why was I given stat points?'

Stat points were increased by 10 points every time someone gained a level, so I should have 0 points at level 1. Therefore, I pondered upon the reason why I was given 40 points. There were many theories, but there was only one hypothesis that was persuasive.

'Perhaps... are stat points obtained every time you level up, even at the minus level?'

I was level -3 and leveled up four times in order to reach level 1. This was the only reason I could think of for the 40 stat points. I rubbed my eyes but the 40 stat points didn't disappear. I was so thrilled that I starting shaking.

'My experience in the minus level wasn't in vain!'

All of my struggles were meaningful. Maybe I wasn't as unlucky as I thought was.

"Kuk! Kukuk...!"

Was there a language in this world that could express this joy? I could only laugh.

"Puhahahahahat ~ ~ ~ ~!!!"

The sound of my laughter was proportional to my joy. The people in the smithy left as I laughed so loudly that my belly hurt. However, I just couldn't stop. After a while, "He!

Keke! Puha...! Urghh..."

Smith stared at me as I laughed through the pain and raised his thumb. "This is a hero's excited laugh! You are such an outstanding figure that I don't know how I mistook your identity yesterday. My vision was lacking. I am ashamed and embarrassed."

I laughed like a madman but he still saw me as a hero? This meant that Smith's affinity with me was at the maximum. While it was true that I had escaped from the minus level, raised my affinity with two quests, and earned a reputation in Bairan Village of over 200, Smith's attitude towards me was still overly flattering.

'Even if my title has the attribute of being easily acknowledged...'

I met Smith's eyes, causing him to lower his gaze. This was the attitude of a student in the presence of his master!

'Is this the effect of the dignity stat? It's only at 10 points at the moment, but is it already having an effect?'

It was possible, considering that Smith's level wasn't very high.

'It might be different with high ranking NPCs. However, dignity seems to have an effect on normal NPCs, even with the number of points in it isn't high.'

I never imagined that his attitude would change so much in a day. It was an excitement beyond my current excitement.

'...First, let's calm down. Let's calm down and try to figure out how the stat points work.'

I worried about it for a moment. Over the past few days, hadn't I acted in an impromptu manner without thinking deeply? Now that the situation was getting better, I needed to be more cautious. It felt like numerous threads were tangled in front of me that could be ruined with my rash behavior.

'I already have a lot of stats at level 1, so there is absolutely no reason to distribute my stat points hastily.'

I thought about the most important thing to me right now. It was...

“Money!”

Yes, money. I needed to make enough money in order to pay for the carriage to move between villages. Smith flinched as I suddenly shouted. I cut straight to the point,

“Didn’t I say it when I first visited your smithy? I want to make and sell high-demand items that will make me as much profit as possible. What is the most appropriate item?”

Smith pointed to a place where arrows were displayed.

“This one.”

An arrow?

Unlike other equipment, arrows were consumables, so the price of it was naturally cheaper. No matter how profitable it was, if the sale price was low, it meant that I had to sell a lot of volume. My spirit deflated.

Smith read my expression and explained,

“This isn’t an ordinary arrow. It is a special arrow made by mixing a small amount of jaffa with steel, allowing it to ignore some of the enemy’s defense and cause damage.”

Ignore defense!

For archers who participated in the Guardian of the Forest raise, these arrows were essential. No, even if it were for players not participating in the raid, the demand would be high considering there were many golems living in the Grey Forest.

“Jaffa...”

Smith saw that I was interested and brought out a light purple mineral from the warehouse.

“Jaffa is a mineral with a low oxygen content, making it easy to smelt, and is remarkably superior to iron. Its weakness is its durability and strength, making it unsuitable to create weapons with jaffa. However, when mixed with steel, the durability increases and the penetration power is maximized. It is normal for cavalry troops to be armed with jaffa-tipped spears.

“It must be expensive.”

“It is two gold per kilogram. Even top-tier iron ore is just cheap stone in front of jaffa.”

“Expensive... Then, how can you produce dozens of jaffa arrows?”

“No, it isn’t expensive. Only a small amount of jaffa is needed to create the arrow. The production cost of a single jaffa arrow is three silver, but the sales price is fixed at six silver. It is double the profit. In addition, this village has a high demand for jaffa arrows. How about it, do you want to learn how to make it?”

If this were yesterday, I would’ve nodded since I could gain a quick understanding through the appraisal skill. But I wasn’t the same. After receiving a recommendation for a suitable item, I needed to learn how to make it myself.

“Show me the arrow for a moment.”

Smith handed me the arrow and I used the appraisal skill.

[Jaffa Arrow]

Rating: Normal

Attack Power: 20~26

An arrow made by mixing a small amount of jaffa with steel.

Due to the effect of combining jaffa with steel, it has extremely high penetration and ignores some of the enemy’s defense.

Weight: 0.1

[A hidden function doesn’t exist.]

[You have grasped the Jaffa Arrow’s material composition, production method, and intentions of its creator.]

[Your understanding of the Jaffa Arrow is now at 89%. You will be able to use the Jaffa Arrow skillfully.]

“.....”

Unfortunately, I couldn't reach 100% understanding after using appraisal on the Jaffa Arrow. Therefore, the production method wasn't added.

‘This arrow...’

Smith looked at me staring at the arrow and asked again,

“Do you want to learn how to make the Jaffa Arrow?”

‘If I use the item disassembly skill, I might be able to raise the remaining 11%... But one arrow is six silver?’

I would need to pay six silver if I wanted to disassemble it. I couldn't afford that type of luxury.

‘It isn't too bad to learn how to make it on my own.’

I nodded in agreement. “I will learn how to make it.”

Smith was happy. “I thought so. First, shall we learn how to smelt the mineral?”

Smith began with the structure of the old furnace commonly used by all blacksmiths in Satisfy, explaining in detail the elements necessary for the smelting process and the principles behind the process.

Blacksmith jargon and chemical terms sometimes popped up, but I didn't feel confused. While Satisfy pursued realism, it was still a game so the barrier wasn't set high in order to allow more people to enjoy it. The blacksmith knowledge required by Satisfy was as easy to understand as the other classes.

In addition, I came prepared. I had been unable to connect after receiving a penalty for dying twice in one day, so I used the spare time to research blacksmithing. Smith's lecture wasn't much different from the smelting method I read about. Thus, it was easier to understand.

I realized the effect of preparation and review. It was fortunate that one of my friends

from middle school had taught me the ‘preparation and review’ method.

‘But that guy wasn’t able to escape the second place ranking all through high school.’

He was a pitiful guy who maintained his second rank in high school, never being able to cross the wall of a classmate who claimed to ‘only study in class.’

On the day the results of the second semester final examinations were released, I was able to understand the feelings of my friend who stood on the rooftop and yelled ‘Why did a genius have to be born in the same year as me?’

There were many talented people that I could never catch up to, no matter how hard I tried.

‘But now things are different.’

I got a legendary class. This time, I would be the outstanding person. I would achieve as much as possible.

CHAPTER 17

I smiled as Smith finished the lecture.

“Is it difficult to understand with just words? If so, then I will demonstrate it for you.”

Smith poured in a certain ratio of iron, coke, and limestone before starting the blast furnace. (The fuel Coke, not the drink/drug)

As Smith’s face and upper body became soaked with sweat, he controlled the hot wind coming from the bottom of the furnace and started burning the coke. At this point, the iron ore was gradually turned into molten iron due to Smith’s reduction interactions.

The limestone reacted by separating the iron and into impurities to form slag. Smith alternated between filtering out the slag and maintaining the heat. The black debris gradually disappeared through holes at the bottom of the furnace, while the molten iron became increasingly orange.

When the iron solidified, it would become pig iron. Pig iron was very hard and brittle because it contained a lot of carbon. It wasn’t suitable for the crafting of weapons. In order to make it suitable for weaponsmithing, it was necessary to reduce the carbon content through a process called steelmaking.

Smith, who was quietly immersed in his task, asked, “Do you understand what smelting is now?”

I nodded and Smith sent me a satisfied expression.

“Now that you’ve seen it, jaffa is easy to smelt. The jaffa ores have fewer impurities and a lower melting point, making it easier to refine than iron ore. The ratio of jaffa to coke to limestone is 12:2:4.”

[Mineral Smelting]

Difficulty: E

Mineral smelting is the basis of production. Smith gives this job to you, who is dreaming of becoming a blacksmith.

Quest Clear Conditions: Succeed in smelting the jaffa ore.

Quest Reward: Affinity with Smith +30, experience +80, 300g of smelted jaffa.

Quest Failure: It isn't easy to perfectly smelt minerals in the beginning.

Smith will understand if you fail.

There was no reason to refuse. I accepted the quest.

Smith prepared the furnace for me and added, "Don't be bothered if you fail. It might've looked easy as you watched me smelt it, but in reality, it's actually quite hard."

I placed the ingredients in the furnace and put my feet on the bellows. At that moment, a translucent arrow appeared and pointed to one side of the bellows.

'Is this the class compensation effect?'

I placed my foot exactly where the arrow pointed. The arrow pointed in another direction, where I aimed the bellows at. The arrow repeatedly blinked, giving me the appropriate tempo. In the end, I managed to heat up the furnace in five minutes, unlike Smith who barely managed it in 10 minutes.

Then a notification window popped up.

[You can sense the temperature due to the rapid changes in ambient temperature. 30 degrees. 31 degrees. 31.5 degrees. 32...]

The strange, yet unwelcome voice was heard in my mind.

[Pagma's descendant is sensitive to changes in temperature. If there is a furnace in the vicinity, you can accurately measure the temperature inside the furnace.]

I placed my hand over the furnace.

[700 degrees. 720 degrees. 740...]

The constantly rising temperature was displayed in the continuously updating notification window.

‘1,000 degrees.’

Iron ore was said to be suitable for smelting between temperatures of 1,150~1,250 degrees Celsius, but jaffa was suitable at around 950~1,000 degrees. As soon as the notification window read 1,000 degrees, I no longer needed to put effort into increasing the temperature.

The jaffa slowly melted down. Compared to iron ore, jaffa had a lower concentration of impurities, so its orange glow was strong from the beginning. I immersed myself in filtering out the impurities. The translucent arrow told me the direction to move the metal pipes, so I was able to do it more quickly and accurately than Smith.

Smith, who was concerned about whether I was doing well or not, became shocked as he checked my work.

“H-Heok! Cough! Cough cough!”

Smith was so surprised that he had trouble breathing. After a while, Smith barely regained stability and asked me in a trembling voice, “How are you so skilled at smelting?”

His complexion was so pale that I was worried the old man might fall down.

“Do you have experience smelting? This wasn’t your first time?”

“...It is my first time smelting...”

Smith looked like he saw a ghost.

“Huh... it is really ridiculous... This is a talent that can’t be represented. A person with no experience is better than his teacher. It’s like I’m dreaming. Are you the reincarnation of Pagma?”

The term 'reincarnation of Pagma' was the common term of praise for especially talented blacksmiths. It was usually the best praise! Any blacksmith would explode with joy if they heard that they were Pagma's reincarnation.

However, I was different.

'I'm not a reincarnation, but a descendant.'

In the meantime, the high purity molten jaffa was completed.

[Quest success!]

Smith smiled warmly and said,

"Absolutely wonderful! You are a great friend."

[Affinity with Smith has risen by 30.]

[Experience has risen by 80.]

[Your level has risen.]

'Good! Level 2!'

There was no greater joy than an easy level up. At one time, I was level 80. Now I was delighted at just reaching level 2. I was very worried about what would happen when my level reached the double digits.

"Bring it here."

Smith poured the molten jaffa into the molten iron, mixing the two metals at a ratio of 1:12. Of course, this meant that for every single part of jaffa, there were 12 parts of iron. Smith placed the mixture in the furnace and started to heat it up again. He didn't forget to mix it together. He mixed it a total of six times before finishing the process by pouring the molten solution into a mold that he had prepared.

We would have to wait 40 minutes for the molten solution to harden inside the mold. Meanwhile, Smith handed me some jaffa that had already been completed.

“This is the first time you’ve smelted metal, so I will give this to you as a memento.”

[3 pieces of jaffa have been acquired.]

One piece of jaffa weighed around 700 grams to 1 kilogram. 300 grams of jaffa were worth one gold, so it was a considerable reward for an E-grade quest.

‘Smith, this person is really great.’

I was liking this blacksmith more and more. Smith approached with a big hammer and started hitting the mold that the molten solution was poured into. In the mold, the hardened molten iron appeared in the shape of a thick wire.

Smith picked up the wire and placed it to one side, where there was another, smaller mold. He placed the wire on the mold and started hammering. After that was done, he used a grindstone to sharpen the edge.

After some careful work, a typical arrowhead with a sharp end was completed. Although it was thick and heavy, the end was very sharp and could penetrate armor with no difficulty. The completed jaffa arrowhead was then secured to a pre-created arrow shaft.

I watched the whole process from beginning to end, then a new notification window popped up.

[Your understanding of the Jaffa Arrow is now at 100%. You will be able to use the Jaffa Arrow perfectly.]

[You have learned how to make the Jaffa Arrow.]

Smith asked me, “How is it? Can you make it?”

“Yes.”

Smith laughed heartily.

“Answering without hesitation... What great confidence. Like any weapon, particularly in arrows, balance is important. You need to balance the feathers, the arrowhead, and the shaft... If the arrows are even a little bit out of balance, they won't be able to fly as far as they can possibly go. It is very delicate work. Even so, can you really make it? Despite only watching the production process once?”

“I can do it.”

“Hoh... then I will trust you again.”

[Create a Jaffa Arrow]

Difficulty: D

The process of mixing two metals is never easy. It requires delicacy to make an arrow. For this reason, it is hard for novice blacksmiths to create a Jaffa Arrow.

But Smith trusts you and leaves you with the expensive materials.

Quest Clear Conditions: Produce 100 Jaffa Arrows.

Quest Reward: Affinity with Smith MAX, experience +300, 50 Jaffa Arrows.

Quest Failure: Smith's disappointment.

* If the client is disappointed, you won't be assigned any new missions for a period of time.

Smith supported me by giving me 100 completed shafts and one kilogram of jaffa. I could also freely use the iron ore. This was all thanks to my incredibly high affinity with the blacksmith. If it were the previous me, I would've just accepted these materials.

“I appreciate the courtesy, but I will make the shafts myself.”

I returned the 100 arrow shafts, but Smith couldn't understand my actions.

“Why bother? If it is because you feel burdened, there is no need to worry.”

Tsk tsk, so this was why he was just a beginner blacksmith.

“Are you going to support me with the shafts every time I make an arrow?”

“No, I can’t... Oh, so you will use this opportunity to learn how to make the shafts properly?”

“That’s right. If possible, please support me with the materials required to make the shaft.”

Smith shrugged and gave me some sturdy branches and good quality feathers. “I was so focused on the smelting and making of the arrowhead that I didn’t tell you how to make the shaft. I’ll teach you how to make the shaft now.”

There were limits to how much a beginner blacksmith could teach me. I told him I would take care of it and pulled out a thick booklet from my inventory. The title was ‘List of Items Production Methods.’

When I opened the book, I saw that four things were listed in the table of contents. They were the production methods of an axe, a pickaxe, the Jaffa Arrow, and ‘Failure’. It might be empty and simple now, but there will a day when this ‘List of Items Production Methods’ book will be filled up.

I opened the page on how to make a Jaffa arrow and read it. The method of making the shaft was described in detail, complete with pictures and text. I read it and read it again for a while before closing the book.

‘Okay, I can do it.’

I was a little tense since it was my first time making an item. No, I was more excited than tense. I started making the arrow shaft. First of all, I straightened the branches into a straight line. The badly bent branches were lightly seared and then straightened. I cut the branches to a regular length and cut the top (a U shaped groove where the arrow would be placed against the bowstring) of the shaft. Then I finished by pasting on feathers.

One, two, three.

As the number of completed shafts increased, my proficiency steadily grew. It was a great effect as it combined my high dexterity that enabled delicate work with the correction effect of my class.

Smith once again felt admiration as he watched.

“This isn’t the workmanship of a novice... You figured out the production method just by looking at the finished shaft? You truly have the eyes of a craftsman. The dexterity and accuracy are also excellent.”

I was able to finish 100 shafts without difficulty before I started making the arrowheads.

CHAPTER 18

I melted iron ore and jaffa together, mixing them in the right proportions. Then, I poured the molten iron into the mold. Then, after 40 minutes, I pounded it into the shape of a wire. I poured a bucket of water on the wire.

Chiiiik!

A loud sound was heard as the scorching wire cooled rapidly. Quenching. This process increased the hardness and strength of the metal.

Smith seemed disappointed for the first time.

“You even know about quenching?”

“Yes. I have studied various production methods. I am a person who is always prepared.”

“Uhh, I don’t know what you studied, but is this the limit of self-study? Why are you using quenching when making the arrowhead? I’m not sure if you know, but if you quench the metal, it becomes harder and less durable. The moment the arrow strikes the enemy, instead of piercing the enemy, the arrowhead might break in the enemy’s armor.”

That was right, but I had a special plan.

“I’ll also use tempering.”

Tempering involved reheating the quenched metal and then gradually lowering it in order to decrease the metal’s brittleness. It was adding a flourish to the production method, which could strengthen the metal in the end.

However, it would take a lot of time to do all of this. It was labor that I didn’t like!

Smith frowned as he felt the same way.

“Do you intend to make the arrows all night? I don’t know why you would spend so much time making the arrows. Those who buy arrows consider them as a one-off

consumable, so why are you so devoted to making the consumable item?"

Why? The reason for increasing the amount of labor was simple. I replied while reheating the quenched wire and hammering at it,

"If I make it a bit better, I can sell it for a more expensive price."

"....."

Smith understood once he heard my words and no longer interfered. I made the arrowheads by repeatedly quenching, forging, and tempering. How much time passed by? I was tired and sore, but the heat from the smithy was even more painful. My awkward hammering skills steadily improved over time.

[Your persistence has risen.]

[Your dexterity has risen.]

My growing stats really made everything feel worthwhile. I was willing to do anything to raise my stats.

"...This."

Dammit! It was labor in the game! But it was also fun!

"I will become addicted to labor one day!"

Would a day come when I enjoyed labor in reality as well? It was a big deal. I might end up with osteoporosis in my later years of life.

Ttang! Ttang!

I complained but still immersed myself in the actions. The wire was slowly converted into an arrowhead as my hammering and my skills became more sophisticated.

"Hoo. Hoo."

I took short breaths. My arms were numb and my skin was hot, but I endured it. My

concentration increased as my stamina fell.

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Patience skill has been activated. Concentration, stamina, and defense will rise to the extremes for one hour.]

Suddenly, the weariness in my body disappeared and I felt refreshed. This was similar to the vigor I felt whenever I ate cereal with milk.

“Ohhhhhh!”

I alternated between the hammer and metals, producing the arrowheads. The effect of my increased concentration was noticeable in the arrowheads. It might've been because I made it myself, but the arrowheads were really beautiful.

I was happy. Sweating in front of the fire gave me a sense of fulfillment.

‘This isn't mere labor. Rather, it is akin to art.’

In reality, I had no talent so I felt no pleasure no matter what I did. I had to work my guts off just to fall behind. But now I had talent. It was a talent that could only be shown in Satisfy, but it was enough.

Ttang! Ttang!

A harmony with the hammer! It was a moment when I felt stability and contentment.

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Breath has increased the effectiveness of your production items]

[Legendary Blacksmith's Breath]

Lv. 1

When you are concentrating on making an item, the will of Pagma's Descendant will fill the production item.

All stats of a production item will increase by 5%.

There is a rare chance of giving special features to your production items.

Then 100 arrows were completed!

[Special Jaffa Arrow]

Rating: Epic

Attack Power: 35~42

An arrow made by a craftsman with great skill and potential but lacking in experience and reputation.

Due to the effect of combining jaffa with steel, it has extremely high penetration and ignores some of the enemy's defense.

* Has a certain chance of ignoring the enemy's defense.

Weight: 0.1

[An epic rated item was produced, so all stats have permanently risen by +4 and reputation throughout the continent has risen by +80.]

[Quest success!]

[Affinity with Smith has risen to the maximum.]

[Experience has risen by 300.]

[Your level has risen.]

There was no time to rejoice over the quest's success and my level up.

"...Epic rated arrow?"

Weren't arrows unconditionally a normal rating?

'I've never heard of an epic rated arrow.'

I was filled with an indescribable sense of emptiness.

“Epic rated consumables... An epic rating appeared when I created arrows...”

If it was a costly item like a sword or armor, then I would’ve made a big profit. But arrows were cheap and considered consumables, so the profit of an epic rated arrow was limited. I was overcome with bad emotions.

‘Dammit! He should’ve told me to make either sword or armor!’

I started to hate Smith, who recommended the Jaffa Arrow. When I looked at the arrow I made, the short feeling of admiration turned into anger.

“You haven’t gone through an apprenticeship yet you are already making something so great! Ideal arrows! This is the first time that I’ve considered an arrow to be beautiful! You are definitely Pagma’s reincarnation! Ahh! You must be tired of my surprise by now! You are great! Amazing! Wonderful!”

I regained my spirit at Smith’s words.

Yes, the first item I made had an epic rating. I didn’t even fail. This fact was enough for me to rejoice and be thankful. As a result of making the epic rated items, all of my stats increased by 4 and my reputation increased.

In addition, the performance of the arrows was amazing. Were there any existing arrows whose attack power exceeded 40? Plus, there was a special option.

‘One arrow is better than a level 20 hand weapon.’

Arrows were less profitable than other equipment items due to their nature, but this great performance meant that I would definitely get some money.

‘I was a little confused because something bigger than I planned emerged.’

I had the Legendary Blacksmith’s Craftsmanship skill. Due to the effect, the abilities of all my items increased by 10%. In other words, the basic attack power of a Jaffa Arrow was 20~26, but the ones I created would be 22~28. From a buyer’s point of view, they would rather buy the Jaffa Arrows from me rather than the general Jaffa Arrows.

But they would be reluctant to pay more. Why? It didn’t make sense to pay more money just for a slight increase in attack power. So I used quenching, forging, and tempering as a way to maximize the effects of my skill. I expected that a fairly good

arrow would emerge from a 10% increase in performance plus a more elaborate production process.

Then the finished arrows had a better performance than my expectations due to the breath skill. I made Jaffa Arrows that had 15 more attack power than existing Jaffa Arrows, and it also had the option of completely ignoring the enemy's defense. A high-level user would purchase the Jaffa Arrows I made, no matter how expensive they were. It was well worth it.

"Pu~~~~~ hahahahat!!"

The superior stats and skills possessed by Pagma's Descendant. The 40 stat points obtained through the minus levels! My stats also increased from making epic rated items. Finally, the arrows that could be sold at an expensive price. I could be certain that today was the best day of my life.

"It is better than my birthday."

Besides, there was only my little sister who remembered my birthday. It was annoying to hear on my birthday things like 'Are you sitting alone at home again?' or 'Don't you have any friends?' This year, I should say those words on my sister's birthday.

Therefore, it was natural to be one hundred times happier today compared to my embarrassing and lonely birthdays.

Smith watched me laughing like a madman and handed over the 100 completed Jaffa Arrows.

"I originally promised you half of this... but I can't take such wonderful things. I want you to take all of them."

The effect of maximum affinity! Wasn't this a beautiful favor?

My heart thumped. Smith seemed just like my grandfather so I couldn't help embracing him.

"You have shown me great kindness! It was a short meeting but I will never forget you."

Tears dripped from Smith's eyes as he hugged me. "Are you leaving already? That's too bad."

“We might meet again someday if we’re lucky.”

“I don’t want you to leave...” Smith glanced at me with a flushed face.

Like a male peacock opening its colorful tail feathers to seduce a female, he tried to attract me using hammers, tongs, and the solid muscles of his upper body. This man, he had the smell of a widower so he must’ve been alone for a long time. Maybe he was so lonely that he became gay after his affinity towards me reached the maximum...? No, he might’ve been gay from the beginning.

His dignity decreased in front of his affection. I straightened and let go.

“Then I’m going now.”

I grabbed the 100 epic arrows and hurriedly moved away. However, due to the 100% reduction in movement speed, I couldn’t leave the blacksmith quickly. Smith approached me and hugged me from behind.

“I can see that you also don’t want to separate from me! You are thinking of me in that passionate heart of yours. I’m reluctant to give up this affection. I won’t forget you until the day I lay in my coffin! No, I will think of you, even in my coffin!”

“This damn person. Stop speaking such terrible words!”

Just like with Doran, the excess weight caused a misunderstanding again.

I barely got away from Smith made a vow to sell my arrows, find a warehouse, and move to another village as soon as possible.

CHAPTER 19

The lead party of the Tzedakah Guild moved along the main road and barely managed to finish the Guardian of the Forest raid after three days.

Kurururung.

The Guardian of the Forest, who was covered with minerals, fell down with a thunderous boom. Some party members were frightened by the sound and fell down, making them unable to resist the attacks of the golems.

“Ack!”

“H-Help me!”

Those who fell into a panic couldn’t feel the pleasure of a successful raid. The face of Jishuka, the leader of the party, didn’t look good as she searched through the remains of the Guardian of the Forest.

“Idiots, what were you paying attention to?”

Jishuka had already thoroughly lectured the party members about the precautions and strategies before confronting the Guardian of the Forest. But that hard work was for nothing, as nobody followed it save for a few of her guild members. Therefore, it was frustrating for her.

“I’d rather die than live with the judgment and learning ability of a monkey.”

The guild’s reputation would become worse because of the party members’ deaths.

“Che.”

Despite her disapproval, she was the genius who saved the lives of her party members with every pull of her bowstring. The first ranked person on the archer rankings.

The party was barely able to escape the crisis thanks to the activities of the martial artist Regas, the twin axe-wielding Vantner and the other members of the Tzedakah Guild. But the damage was severe.

“A total of 75 people were killed.”

There were four guild members among the list of deceased. Unlike the other fools who died from stupidity, they were killed in battle against the Guardian of the Forest.

“But it is over.”

It was a really tough battle.

The Guardian of the Forest was armed with superior defense, high health, and AoE skills that kept the party’s main members occupied. Meanwhile, it constantly summoned golems that put pressure on the other party members.

Without the overwhelming actions of Jishuka and Regas, the raid would’ve 100% failed. Jishuka checked the items dropped by the Guardian of the Forest and was unable to hide her disappointment. The other party members also sighed.

They had fought against the Guardian of the Forest and the golems for two days, and when the guardian was finally defeated, they were disturbed by new golems.

The loot was tacky compared to such suffering. 30 iron ores, 7 orichalcum ores, and 1 blue orichalcum ore.

Regas shrugged. “The Amethyst Shield didn’t emerge again this time.”

The Tzedakah Guild constantly challenged the Guardian of the Forest raid once every two weeks in order to get the Amethyst Shield. But the drop rate was the worst.

“The difficulty of an S-grade quest is beyond one’s imagination.”

Even though they were the same S-grade quests, the difference between a single quest and linked quests was like the difference between heaven and earth. Vantner picked up the blue orichalcum and said.

“Fortunately, we received this.”

[Blue orichalcum]

Orichalcum is a mineral born with the power of moonlight and the Guardian of the Forest.

It is impossible to erode the Guardian of the Forest's magic power, but it has the best hardness and strength among all minerals.

It is lightweight and becomes much stronger in the darkness.

* Advanced blacksmith skills are required to smelt it.

Weight: 3

The value couldn't be determined at the present time, but it would become an expensive commodity once an advanced blacksmith appeared. Jishuka was filled with disappointment as she returned to the village with her exhausted party members. The party members who died had resurrected and were waiting in the square.

Toban converted the value of the minerals into money by dividing it according to the market price, then distributed it to the party members. They barely avoided a deficit. There were no complaints from the guild members, but the general users complained about the small compensation.

But what could they do? This was the result.

Jishuka disbanded the party and gathered the guild members. Then she spoke with a serious expression.

"This is already the fourth raid without any success. Rumors are spreading among the general users that there is no value in participating in the Guardian of the Forest raid. In the next raid, the level of the participating users will be even lower. This is difficult."

The Tzedakah Guild was composed of the top rankers. But their reputation was low, which was why they were a small guild.

The 17 members of the Tzedakah Guild had been together before Satisfy, since the days of the L.T.S game. It was impossible for them to challenge the Guardian of the

Forest raid with their strength alone. Therefore, they attracted general users. But that wouldn't continue to work.

Toban, the level 172 paladin and the guild's chief of staff, nodded.

"I need the Amethyst Shield for a linked quest, but it can't be helped. For the time being, we have to give up on the Guardian of the Forest raid and try to strengthen the guild's power."

Vantner, the 2nd ranked person on the guardian knight rankings, wasn't armed with a shield despite choosing a defensive class. He instead chose to wield twin axes.

"That's right. It's useless in this state, so we can't be impatient. Let's leave the Guardian of the Forest raid for a while and increase our quality."

When she looked at the faces of the guild members, they all seemed to have the same opinion. Only Regas' eyes were shining like lanterns. He was clearly thinking 'anything is good as long as I can fight!'

Jishuka thought about it and declared,

"We will give up on the raid for the next three months. In the meantime, we will improve our level and equipment. If we gain 15 levels in the next three months, can't we kill that guy? Regas, you should gain 20 levels."

Jishuka laughed brightly. Her half-moon eyes were sexy; however, they were considered horrifying to the guild members. Their leader was scary. If they didn't fulfill the goal, they really would experience hell. The guild members, who knew better than anyone how fierce Jishuka was, gulped and Regas cried out in a trembling voice.

"Let's go train!"

Thus, the Tzedakah Guild discretely dispersed.

Jishuka headed to the guild warehouse alone. The South American's unique beauty and curvy body attracted the attention of males. She was a famous ranker so the crowd around her increased.

But she ignored them.

Jishuka left the blue orichalcum in the warehouse and headed to the auction house without worrying about being followed or not. The blue orichalcum was an item that could be sold at a later date, but not now. For the moment, the iron ore and orichalcum would sell for the best price.

Jishuka registered the minerals before looking through the auction house.

“Show me the list of Jaffa Arrows.”

A transparent screen appeared in front of Jishuka. The list of Jaffa Arrows currently registered at the auction house appeared on the screen. The immediate purchase price for the Jaffa Arrows was 6 silver.

It was an incredibly expensive price for one arrow, but she couldn't see any other arrows after using it. Jishuka swept up all the arrows on the list. She didn't care about money. She invested the money obtained from being a top ranker and pinpointed exactly where she should use it.

“What is this?”

Jishuka confirmed the bid price for the Jaffa Arrows at the bottom of the list and frowned. It was the only one without an immediate purchase price set. There was also a total of 99 bids, with the top bid at 18 silver.

Jishuka wondered why some madman would bid three times the price of a Jaffa Arrow, but then she noticed that the name of the arrows was purple, not white.

‘Did I see it incorrectly?’

She blinked but it was still purple. She hurriedly checked the details.

[Special Jaffa Arrow]

Rating: Epic

Attack Power: 35~42

An arrow made by a craftsman with great skills and potential but lacking in experience and reputation.

Due to the effect of combining jaffa with steel, it has extremely high penetration and ignores some of the enemy's defense.

* Has a certain chance of ignoring the enemy's defense.

Weight: 0.1

“.....!”

Jishuka's eyes widened. If she didn't know that people were paying attention to her, she would've screamed wildly.

‘Unbelievable!’

Jishuka was surprised beyond amazement. She had played Satisfy all day for the past six months and had adventured with all types of people. She collected as much information as possible by using money and her guild members.

Nevertheless, she never imagined that an epic rated arrow would ever exist. She was convinced that arrows were unconditionally normal rated items.

She went to famous blacksmiths with various materials and asked them to make arrows, but all of the arrows born from their hands were normal rated. She had never heard of or ever witnessed a higher rated arrow.

Until this moment! Epic arrows, not rare, appeared in front of her. In addition, the performance was fraudulent.

Jishuka bid on it right away. The bid price was a huge 35 silver.

It was difficult to judge if the arrows were worth it considering they were consumables, but she needed to consider its scarcity. She also believed it could be used as a secret weapon when meeting a strong opponent.

‘Who is the person who made this?’

She thought of two people first. The 1st and 2nd ranked blacksmiths, Panmir and Steng. However, they didn't fit the explanation that the blacksmith ‘lacks skill and reputation’ because both of them had a high reputation.

‘...A blacksmith who surpasses them is hiding.’

It was probably a blacksmith who put a lot into their skill level, but their character level was low as a result and as such didn’t enter the top rankings. The explanation of ‘great skill and potential’ strongly enticed her.

‘If I find them...’

Jishuka canceled the registration of the black iron and orichalcum.

‘Thanks to the Guardian of the Forest raid, I have steadily gathered minerals.’

She planned to use the best minerals as bait for the blacksmith who made the epic rated arrows.

{Contact all the users in the top 100 blacksmith rankings and measure their skill level. Make a shortlist of those whose skill levels are high compared to their character level.}

Jishuka’s command appeared in the guild chat window and upset the guild members.

{What are you suddenly saying? Contacting blacksmiths out of nowhere?}

{We need to level up!}

Jishuka dismissed the opposition.

{Shut up! There is a greatly skilled person hiding! If we find them and make them join the guild, the Guardian of the Forest raid won’t be a problem.}

{Are they that skilled?}

{This blacksmith is better than Panmir and Steng. The performance of the items they produce is likely to exceed the existing items. So far, they haven’t surfaced so no one is aware of this blacksmith, but that is no longer the case. All guilds on the continent will be frantically trying to find the blacksmith. We can’t lose them... Find them! Find the blacksmith before anyone else.}

{If Master says so...}

{This blacksmith must be huge. Okay, let’s find them!}

As a rule, the Tzedakah Guild didn't accept new guild members. They were a small number of elites who only recognized and relied on each other since the L.T.S days. Their small number was a constraint and the growth of their guild was slow, but no one complained.

They couldn't occupy castles like large guilds, but anyone would fear their power. They might not have as much reputation as large guilds, but they displayed their authority with their force. The Tzedakah Guild members occupied the top three rankings of each class in the six months since starting Satisfy, so they were confident and proud.

The 17 members whose strength would make them the top in their country, it was the first time they were interested in another person since the L.T.S days.

"Someone raised the bid price again?"

Jishuka received the notification that her bid on the Special Jaffa Arrows failed and didn't hesitate to bid again.

The first epic rated arrows! The bidding price skyrocketed.

CHAPTER 20

There was an uproar in Satisfy.

Famous guilds were in motion to find the mysterious blacksmith. In various media and the Internet, the epic-rated arrows appeared as a hot issue. Who was the craftsman with great skills and potential but lacking experience and reputation?

Many people were searching for the blacksmith's whereabouts.

'It is a harder path than others. I always did my best. Nonetheless, there is a better blacksmith than me?'

Panmir had only experienced making an epic-rated item twice. He had the title of the first epic-rated item maker. However, there was no mention of 'craftsman' in his epic item description. Who was the person given the title of craftsman, which wasn't even allowed for the number one ranking blacksmith?

Ttang! Ttang!

Panmir was spurred by a sense of competitiveness towards the unknown blacksmith.

Meanwhile, Shin Youngwoo, the person who was receiving everyone's attention, was eating cup noodles at a convenience store before going to work.

"What a jerk, charging 1,000 won for a cup of noodles? Does he want people like me to starve to death? Sigh, people really can't live without acting dirty."

I grumbled as I ate.



5.30 a.m.

It might be Sunday, but the office of labor was always busy. The days when students came on a daily basis to find work had disappeared. These days, young people turned away from labor jobs! Foreign workers had long taken over, making the future of South Korea seem bleak.

‘I have a headache.’

I still hadn’t adapted to the smell of cigarettes and alcohol early in the morning.

‘I want to finish the work quickly so I can go home and rest.’

As I sat there, a young man in a construction worker’s uniform cried out.

“Looking for four workers for the Shinwoo Building’s construction site!”

Construction site workers did things like clean, move bricks and wood, and shovel sand. The physical labor was harsh, and I would eat a lot of dirt, but I had done it often. Therefore, I didn’t hesitate to raise my hand.

“Here! Over here... *cough!*”

An alcohol drinker or heavy smoker punched me in the belly! I was pushed into a corner and missed the chance to be employed by the construction site.

“Those guys are heartless! You should send the pitiful young people first!”

While I was complaining with irritation, a middle-aged man in a short-sleeved shirt spoke, “I need three tilers with strength. You should have experience.”

A tiles assistant would follow the main tiler and assist in the transfer of materials such as tiles, cement, and sand. It was annoying to carry the tiles if I met a bad tiler and I had to be careful not to break the tiles, but it was decent work.

I raised my hand. “Here! I have carried tiles more than 10 times... *Ugh!*”

I was once again pushed back into a corner by the older men and lost the chance to be hired because there were three people more experienced than me.

“Anyone else?”

“Here! I do... *Ack!*”

There were several companies looking for laborers, but I wasn’t hired due to the continuous interference.

“Ah, you! You will regret not seeing my value!”

The older men in the workforce were hindering me. It seemed that they didn't like me snatching away their spots.

“Who could come here because they like it? Don't you think I want to work part-time like other young people? I'm making a living just like you! Let me get something as well!”

The mere sight of them was enough to make me angry, like seeing a barking dog. However, my opponents were adults. So, I couldn't say anything bad and sat down again.

“Kukuk.” The chief, who had been reading his newspaper on his desk, looked at me.

Was he around his early 30s? He was a person who inherited this office from his father. For every 10 times I came here looking for a job, I'd gone home three times in vain. The chief was watching me when another person arrived.

“Who can do electric pulling work? No experience is needed. I will pay 110,000 won a day, so come quickly.”

It was 20,000 won more than the usual pay. However, I didn't move. Of course, there was a reason for offering more money.

‘I can't forget how awful it was.’

I'd tried electrical cable pulling only once.

It was just pulling a huge electrical cable, so it was a very simple task. However, it consumed a tremendous amount of stamina. I couldn't let the cable hit my wrist. Moreover, the cables were very thick and the weight was heavy.

It was just pulling, but... I would get blisters on my hands even while wearing gloves, and I would suffer from muscle aches for at least two days.

‘It was an oasis in winter...’

I still remembered the nightmare from last winter. The other men present looked into the distance, whistled or went out to smoke.

“No one?” The man asked again with an awkward expression.

Then one of the middle-aged men pointed towards me. “This young man can do it very well.”

“Really. He is very active and has amazing stamina.”

“Hasn’t he done a lot of electrical cable pulling? An expert, expert.”

‘These insane humans!’

I glared at them to stop, but the other men continued to recommend me. Then the person offering the job pointed to me. “Excuse me, young man. Shall we go together? You look very good.”

If I followed the atmosphere, today I would enter hell. I glanced towards the chief, but he just smiled. In the end, I raise my phone to my ear, like I had received an incoming call.

“Yes, this is Shin Youngwoo. Ah, there was a spot? Yes, right away...”

Ddiririring ~ ddiririring~

“.....”

The default S Corporation’s ringtone was heard from the phone at my ear. In the end, the other workers there laughed until tears emerged from their eyes. The employer also laughed. “Then let’s go.”

Who would call me this early in the morning? Moreover, I barely ever received phone calls. So, how did I receive a call at this exact timing? Then I belatedly saw the caller ID and hurriedly picked up the phone. It was an unforgettable voice.

(Hello~ This is Mother’s Heart is Happy Financial Services. Customer Shin Youngwoo, you do know that the deadline is tomorrow right?)

“...Already?”

(If you have forgotten, does that mean there is no money?)

“O-Of course not. Yes, I understand. I will have the amount ready for tomorrow.”

(Thank you, Debt... no, Customer. Have a happy day. Mother's Heart is Happy hopes you will smile today~)

The call ended.

“This damn...”

I'd played games and ignored reality, forgetting that I was a debtor. I had to work hard to pay off the interest. It would be hard work, not easy work, that would get me out of this position.

“Excuse me... Will you really pay 110,000 won?”

“Yes!”

“Is it really true?”

“Of course! You will never go hungry when working for me!”

I eventually left towards hell. That evening...

“O-Oppa?” Se-hee stammered when she saw my exhausted self return home. I couldn't even take my shoes off before collapsing.

“Shit... The words were true, but... doing all that labor only to receive cream bread...? There wasn't even milk...! What type of people would give cream bread and no milkkkkkk?!!! U-Ughhh... I have to play the game... Arrows... sold...”

I couldn't remember anything after that. It was because I fell asleep.



When I woke up, I felt like I had been crushed by steel. My body was throbbing all over, and I barely managed to check the time. It was 5.20 a.m.

“Ugh!”

This was serious. It was late when I took into consideration the distance between my

house and the labor office. I hurried to change into my work clothes while worrying about getting a good job. If I arrived late, then something like yesterday might happen again.

“Ack~! I’m going.”

After I paid the interest for the loan, I would only have 9,220 won in my hands. I needed to make money to pay the fee for the game in a week. As I put on my shoes without washing up, my mother approached and patted my shoulder. “Come eat breakfast.”

“I can’t. I’m already late,” I replied hurriedly.

“Youngwoo,” my mother suddenly said my name in a serious voice. I cowered reflexively. It was obvious that her nagging would begin. My mother knew about my debts. She wondered why I was addicted to games and was saddened by my absence from school. She mourned that I had debts and was living in this situation.

However, when I looked back, my mother’s eyes were calm and welcoming.

“Come eat,” she said.

“W-why? I have to go to the office quickly.”

At that moment, the door opened, and my father appeared. My father sat at the table, opened the newspaper and said quietly, “Take a break today.”

“A break? What are you saying.”

“*Cough, cough.*” My father just coughed and looked at the newspapers.

My mother whispered in my ears, “You came back really exhausted yesterday. Your father was worried since he carried you to your bedroom~”

“Huh?”

“We are your mother and father. We don’t want to see our son suffer. Didn’t you suffer yesterday? You should rest for today.”

“M-Mother...” I was touched by the fact that my parents were still looking after me,

despite all the disappointment I'd caused them in the past year.

At that time, Sehee exited her room with a yawn and handed me something. It was a pain relief patch.

"Paste it on. Didn't you go through a lot of trouble yesterday?"

"S-Sehee..."

'Ahh! What a beautiful family!'

I cried out as I embraced my mother and Sehee.

I'd thought I was alone in this difficult world, but I had such warm family beside me. My family members were like angels to their disappointing son and brother. I was truly grateful to have this family.

"W-What? Who are you hugging? O-Oppa's hug is good... Ah, no. Isn't it bad?" Sehee grumbled quietly as she hugged me back, while my mother quietly stroked my head. After that, I took off my work clothes and sat at the table, feeling the taste of beef rib soup for the first time in months.

"Father, then can you pay off my debt?"

Beeok! My father, who was eating quietly, gazed at me and threw his spoon. I shrieked as it hit me in the forehead, while my mother clicked her tongue and handed my father a new spoon.

"Haven't I already told you? We want you to be self-reliant. You are already 26 years old. You should be responsible for your own actions."

The atmosphere had been so full of harmony that I never imagined a spoon would fly over. As I rubbed my forehead, my father handed me an envelope.

He said, "I will give you an allowance for today. You are resting today because of us, so I can't let you make a loss."

"Father..." I was touched. My usually blunt father was taking care of me today. I would gladly accept the allowance.

‘Then...’

I grasped the number of bills in the envelope with my sharp fingertips, but the number seemed a little small? When I looked inside the envelope, I saw seven bills. Feeling disappointed, I spoke carefully, “Father, the minimum payment for labor these days is at least 9...”

My father looked at me regretfully. “Huh, really? I’m sorry, but that is all the cash I have on me right now. Be satisfied with that.”

He was telling me not to ask for the missing amount later. I had forgotten, but my father was quite restrained when it came to spending money. If he bought a chicken, he thought that the family should eat it over three meals.

I was forced to surrender at receiving an allowance of 70,000 won.

‘At least he gave it in the first place.’

CHAPTER 21

After breakfast, my parents immediately headed towards the vegetable store that they ran. The two of them normally left at 5 a.m, so they were quite late today.

‘They are late because of breakfast with their son.’

I suddenly felt that tsunami of emotions again as tears filled my eyes. It was the first time my stomach felt so full in a while.

I sat on the couch and dozed off, before waking up because of Sehee. Sehee had changed into her school uniform and looked like a neat schoolgirl. She was my sister, but I had to admit that she was beautiful.

“What? Why are you looking at me like that?”

“I’m glad to see you. You grew up well.”

“W-What are you saying all of a sudden!?” Sehee flushed red before hitting my forearm.

‘What? Did I do something wrong? But what is this cool feeling?’

I felt some relief in the area that Sehee had hit. It was like a massage!

“Ahh, good! Hit me more! More! Keep hitting.”

“Kyaaak! Pervert!”

Slap!

...Why did she slap me all of a sudden? I placed a hand on my tingling cheek as Sehee shouted, “I’ve filled up the tub with hot water. Then your body will feel better. This perverted Oppa!”

“Ah, eh, yes...”

She was someone who got angry at me but always took care of me.

‘But why am I a pervert?’

Sehee headed to school while I soaked in the hot water.

“My fatigue is going away.”

Then after a few moments...

I exited the bathroom and paid the loan interest through a direct account transfer. It was hard to bear seeing the money from my blood and sweat disappear before my eyes.

“Ugh... This world is hell...”

I needed stability. So, I hurriedly entered the capsule and connected to Satisfy.

‘How much have the arrows sold for?’

“Login.”

Jiing.

The capsule’s door closed, and my field of view slowly turned black. Then the familiar system voice and music entered my ears, then my vision brightened again.

“The air is good.”

I appeared in a place which reminded me of a charming village in medieval Europe and immediately stated a command, “Status window.”

Name: Grid

Level: 3 (75/500)

Class: Pagma’s Descendant

* The probability of adding additional options when making items will increase.

* The probability of item enhancement will increase.

* All equipment items can be worn unconditionally.

However, there is a penalty depending on the rating of the item.

Title: One who Became a Legend

* Abnormal conditions don't work well for you.

* You won't die when health is at the minimum.

* Easily acknowledged.

Health: 336/336 Mana: 87/87

Strength: 24 + 5 Stamina: 22 Agility: 16 Intelligence: 29

Dexterity: 55 Persistence: 21

Composure: 14 Indomitable: 16 Dignity: 14 Insight: 14

Stat Points: 60

Weight: 3,095/1,000

* The weight limit exceeds 200%, so movement speed is reduced by 100%.

The body is heavy and cannot exert any power properly.

The probability of receiving the 'weakened' state has become really high.

"Level 3... Huhu, is that really the case?"

My stats had increased by making an epic rated item. Considering the 60 stat points which I hadn't used yet, I was actually around level 26. If I equipped Mamon's Greatsword and Mengel's Plate Armor, I could demonstrate the combat power of a level 50.

"Is this the feeling of superiority that only a special person can feel? Huhuhut..."

In a square filled with people, I forgot the harshness of reality as I talked excitedly to myself. Then with one hand on my hip, I laughed like the protagonist of a movie. The women passing by sent me dirty looks and gossiped with each other.

"What is with that person? Striking such a strange pose and laughing while talking to himself."

“Is he on an ego trip? Perhaps he has the prince disease?”

“He is ugly. He probably doesn’t have a lover.”

Normally, I would be unhappy, but right now, I was so thrilled that I didn’t care about the gazes of others. I ignored what they were saying and checked the experience of my various skills.

[Legendary Blacksmith’s Craftsmanship Skill] Lv 1 (3.7%)

[Legendary Blacksmith’s Breath] Lv 1 (2.0%)

I’d thought it would take longer for the experience of these skills to rise.

‘Is it thanks to making an epic item?’

I headed to the auction house with a light heart. As usual, the auction house was bustling with people.

“I wonder what the winning bid is...”

The price for one Jaffa Arrow was six silver. However, the Jaffa Arrows I’d made had an epic rating! I expected the price to be 3~4 times higher.

In the case of general equipment items, it was reasonable to calculate that rare-rated items would be three times more expensive than normal items, while epic items would be seven times more expensive than normal items.

However, I soon became worried. Would even a rich user want to spend so much money buying arrows? In the first place, consumables were cheap compared to equipment items.

‘Yes, don’t expect too much.’

I opened the auction window while thinking that I would be satisfied if they sold for double the price. Then...

“K-Keok...!”

After confirming the bidding price of the Jaffa Arrows, I couldn't shut my mouth. Meanwhile, I could hear the voices of the women looking at me.

"Isn't he that person laughing to himself in the square? Oh. my. What is he doing now? His mouth has fallen open."

"Kyaaak~! His saliva is dripping! Nasty!"

"Ugly... He must have no lover."

"Argh... Uhhh..."

I tried to shut my mouth, but it wasn't easy.

[Special Jaffa Arrow] (99 Pieces)

[Bid Price: 72 silver per piece.]

It sold for 12 times the price of ordinary Jaffa Arrows!

"Eh...uh...aack..."

I touched the inventory with trembling hands, then I took out the calculator which was a default item provided to all users. $99 \times 72 = ?$

"...7,128..."

100 silver was 1 gold. 7,128 silver meant 71 gold and 28 silver. For reference, 100 gold was worth around 120,000 won in cash.

'Didn't I create 100 arrows in around a day?'

It was approximately a day in game time. If I calculated it in real time, I'd earned around 84,000 won in less than six hours.

"Ha...hahaha..."

I was thrilled. Uncontrollable laughter emerged from my mouth, "Puhahahahat!"

“T-That person has finally gone mad!”

“Ugly! He definitely doesn’t have a lover! His mother must be the only female contact in his phone.”

‘Cough, do their words have to be so sharp?’

No, I wouldn’t be shaken by these females.

‘Talk in your hearts.’

At this moment, I could still smile even while hearing such shameful words.

‘I can see a definite way.’

Debt?

“I will pay it back in the game!”

There was no need to go find labor jobs. It was more profitable to make money from the items I create in the game. Indeed, Pagma’s Descendant was definitely a goose that lay golden eggs.

I formed a fist and shivered, while the auctioneer at the counter handed me gold and silver coins. However, why was the amount of money lacking?

“Why are you only giving me 60 gold and 59 silver?”

The auction house manager smiled at my question.

“The amount is limited to 10 gold and 69 silver because of the sales commission. There is a 15% sales commission for epic rated items. Thank you for using our service.”

The commission fee was 8% for normal rated items and 10% for rare rated items. Compared to that, the sales commission for epic rated items was too expensive.

‘How much is the commission fee for unique or legendary rated items?’

Suddenly, the auction house and Mother’s Heart is Happy seemed to overlap. Exploitation was the same in reality and in Satisfy.

“Shit... I will become a successful person who exploits the weak...”

I would produce legendary items which weren't possible for anyone else except Pagma's Descendant! The two billion users in Satisfy would be overwhelmed!

“But that is a story for the distant future. Ugh!”

Tears flowed as I thought about the 15% commission. This was because the day before, I hadn't been able to open a stall because I'd needed to go work, so I had decided to use the auction house.

Once I got the money, I thought about whether I should take the carriage to Winston Village or not.

‘I can stay here and make a lot of money with the Jaffa Arrows, so do I really need to move villages?’

I was trying to move villages because I wanted to find a suitable hunting ground. However, I didn't need to cling to hunting and leveling up, when I could make a profit by making items.

‘It would be good to just stay here and make items all the time...’

However, there was one thing I had to consider. It was the fact that Smith was gay!

‘If I stay here alone with him... Just imagining it was terrible.’

I wasn't in a hurry to hunt now, but I would be more comfortable living in a village suitable for my level. In the end, I decided to move to Winston as planned and headed towards the carriages. Just like last time, I started negotiating the price while armed with the saddest stories.

“My ailing sister is waiting for me in Winston Village...”

“Oh, no! Then I will leave one hour early. Climb into my carriage!”

“But right now, I only have seven gold...”

“Oh, I thought you were a customer with a reservation. I'm sorry.”

My first bargaining attempt failed!

“My grandmother died the day before I was born, and her death anniversary is today. I needed to go to Winston Village right now, but I only have 7 gold and 50 silver...”

“Um, I want to help you because of your high reputation and your situation, but it is too much of a loss to visit Winston Village for 7 gold and 50 silver. I’m sorry.”

My second bargaining attempt failed. It was the same as humans constantly stepping on other humans.

“You should give me a choco pie, ah, these people. You should realize that we are all the same!”

In the end, I failed to negotiate the price I wanted, but I got on the carriage that was the cheapest.

“Let’s depart for Winston. It should be a quick and safe trip, considering the money I paid. And be friendly! You should show full hospitality.”

“...I will be very grateful if you didn’t talk.”

Travelling always made people excited. The bumpy carriage ride and the unfriendly attitude of the coachman were bad, but my mood was good.

CHAPTER 22

The carriage departed in the afternoon and arrived at Winston Village on the morning of the next day. Winston Village was unusually large for its name. Four times larger and more active than Bairan Village, Winston Village was comparable to the fortified city of Patrian!

As I paid the coachman 8 gold and 90 silver, I asked for proper customer service from him.

“I have one question.”

“Ask me. I will tell you what I can.”

“Why isn’t Winston called a city?”

“Originally, it was a village smaller than Bairan. However, there are many places suitable for beginner and intermediate level travelers nearby. As these places became famous, the number of visitors gradually increased. There is a rumor that it will be upgraded to a city in the near future if this trend continues. I heard that Earl Steim’s heir will be sent as the new lord... It will be called a city by then. But I don’t know exactly when that will be.”

‘Earl Steim? Where have I heard that name before?’

I was having a hard time remembering since I’d experienced so many things at all once.

“Well, it has nothing to do with me anyway.”

‘Now, shall I begin?’

I headed to the warehouse administration. After I informed the manager of the registration number and password to my warehouse, the administrator extended his hand. It meant to give him a tip.

‘Dammit. I have to pay just to use the warehouse?’

I handed over 30 silver with trembling hands. The administrator checked the amount and started to chant a spell while drawing a small circle with a magic wand. Then a small warehouse was summoned before me using space and teleport magic.

The warehouse was empty. I'd had sold all my japtem in order to buy potions for Ashur's three month quest. Since its early days, I had played Satisfy for one year, but there was only dust in my warehouse now.

"Ugh... in reality and in the game..."

I opened my inventory with frustration.

[Mamon's Greatsword]

[Rating: Epic]

Durability: 88/204 Attack Power: 178~301 Attack Speed: -16%

-Additional water damage will be added to all critical attacks.

This is the greatsword patronized by the guardian of Lake Pamian, Mamon. Due to the influence of the lake, this sword has the strong aura of water.

Conditions of Use: Level 65 or higher, more than 260 strength, more than 150 stamina.

Weight: 1,050]

[Mengel's Plate Armor]

[Rating: Rare]

Durability: 51/180 Defense: 165 Movement Speed: -2%

* Strength +10

This is a work made by the blacksmith Mengel in the fortified city of Patrian. The defense is improved and the weight lowered. The wearer of this work can feel Mengel's strong willpower that remained behind.

Conditions of Use: Level 60 or higher, more than 180 strength.

Weight: 1,203]

[Intermediate Potion] (34)

[This is a potion which has been formulated with five or more herbs.

Restores 1,500 health.

The cooldown time is 20 seconds.

Weight: 306]

[Advanced Potion] (27)

[This is a potion that has been formulated with ten or more herbs.

Restores 4,000 health.

The cooldown time is 20 seconds.

Weight: 324]

[Intermediate Strength Potion] (2)

It is a potion prepared by blending a small amount of ogre's blood with different types of herbs.

Increases your strength by 50 points for 5 minutes.

There is no cool down time.

Weight: 62]

[Intermediate Agility Potion] (3)

[It is a potion prepared by blending a small amount of harpy's blood with different types of herbs.

Increases your agility by 50 points for 5 minutes.

There is no cool down time.

Weight: 90]

[Special Jaffa Arrow] (1)

[Rating: Epic

Attack Power: 35~42

An arrow made by a craftsman with great skills and potential but lacks experience and reputation.

Due to the effect of combining jaffa with steel, it has extremely high penetration and ignores some of the enemy's defense.

* Has a certain chance of ignoring the enemy's defense.

Weight: 0.1]

[Yaffa] (3)

[A metal obtained from smelting Jaffa ore. The hardness of the ore has such a weak strength that it is impossible to produce a powerful item with it. However, the properties will change when mixed with steel.

Weight: 60]

I wanted to ignore this reality, but this was the full contents of my inventory. So, I tried to put Mamon's Greatsword and Mengel's Plate Armor into my inventory to reduce my possessions weight.

"I haven't appraised Mamon's Greatsword or Mengel's Plate Armor yet."

The Legendary Blacksmith's Appraisal skill revealed the hidden function of items. It was possible to use the appraisal skill on Mamon's Greatsword or Mengel's Plate Armor, causing my understanding to rise.

I didn't hesitate to use appraisal on the two items.

[A hidden function doesn't exist.]

[You have grasped the materials that make up Mamon's Greatsword, the

production method and the intentions of its creator.]

[Your understanding of Mamon's Greatsword is now at 33%.]

[A hidden function doesn't exist.]

[You have grasped the materials that make up Mengel's Plate Armor, the production method, and the intentions of its creator.]

[Your understanding of Mengel's Plate Armor is now at 65%.]

My current stats meant I didn't meet the conditions to use Mamon's Greatsword and Mengel's Plate Armor. Due to the resulting penalty, Mamon's Greatsword had a 30% drop in attack power while Mengel's Plate Armor had a 20% drop in defense.

However, my understanding had now risen dramatically.

[Due to your class characteristics, you have equipped Mamon's Greatsword.]

[A penalty is applied because the item conditions aren't met.]

[Attack power of Mamon's Greatsword will decrease by 20%. Only half of the option effects will be applied.]

[Your understanding of Mamon's Greatsword is high so the penalties are reduced.]

[Due to your class characteristics, you have equipped Mengel's Plate Armor.]

[A penalty is applied because the item conditions aren't met.]

[Mengel's Plate Armor's defense will decrease by 8%. Only half of the option effects will be applied.]

[Your understanding of Mengel's Plate Armor is high so the penalties are reduced.]

"Hoh."

As the understanding increased, the penalty decreased. Mamon's Greatsword now had 143~240 attack and Mengel's Plate Armor had 152 defense. The options were still

only half applied, but it was pleasing just having the penalties reduced.

However, I wasn't unconditionally happy. I had a 100% understanding with the axe and pickaxe, but my understanding of Mamon's Greatsword and Mengel's Plate Armor was too low. It was honestly disappointing.

'I would've preferred if it went up higher.'

Well, I didn't need to be too hasty. I could raise understanding by disassembling, repairing and using the items, so it would be resolved over time.

"Let's try repairing it."

Mamon's Greatsword and Mengel's Plate Armor both had low durability currently. I could use the Legendary Blacksmith's Repair skill to improve the understanding of these two items.

Then...

[A repair tool is needed.]

"Ah, a separate repair tool is needed?"

'What is a repair tool? Fuck! My money! Money! Money!'

During my days as a warrior, I didn't have the repair skill, so I always had to repair items at an NPC blacksmith. Therefore, I didn't know something like a repair tool was needed.

'It's no wonder why the repairs were so expensive!'

I could postpone repairing the items until next time. However, this was a warehouse which I had wasted 30 silver to open. If I closed the warehouse and went to buy the repair tool, 30 silver would fly away!

Ultimately, I shook off my fury and left Mamon's Greatsword and Mengel's Plate Armor in the warehouse anyway. The equipment storage fee was 10 silver per item. This was

a terrifying expenditure.

“The world is a thief...”

Spending 30 silver to open the warehouse and then 10 silver to place an item inside it...! Mother's Heart is Happy, the auction house and the warehouse administrators, they were all crooks in my eyes.

“My 50 silver... My 50 silver...!”

50 silver was 600 won in cash. That was enough to buy 200 milliliters of milk, which could relieve my thirst and make my bones sturdy at the same time. I stored the two items which weighed a considerable amount.

“Kuuack...”

My hands shook. After glaring at the warehouse administrator who politely said farewell to me, I headed towards the square.

There was a wide range of people in the square, from newbies who had just created their characters to users wearing level 100 equipment.

People were moving around in order to adapt to the virtual reality. There were people looking for a party, buying or selling goods, sharing quests, beggars, couples, and people who simply enjoyed the landscape. All types of people were seen.

I stood still and observed them.

The beginner users were mainly using East Street, while the average-level users were mainly using South Street. The West and North Streets were favored by everyone, regardless of level.

East Street contained NPCs who gave beginner quests and led to the most suitable hunting grounds for them. Meanwhile, the south had the suitable quests and hunting grounds for average-level users. The west and north were areas which covered all levels, or basically, the area crowded with stores.

“The blacksmith is likely to be in the west or north.”

As I came to this conclusion while observing the people, a notification window popped

up.

[Insight has increased by 1.]

The insight stat could be used to detect objects or predict risks. However, I hadn't seen its performance yet, so I didn't know if this stat was really useful.

"Well, any increase is good."

I didn't feel much inspiration as I explored West Street and East Street. However, I then found a blacksmith on East Street. The exterior of the building was huge.

It was a two-story building, making it incomparable to the small smithy in Bairan Village. Unlike Smith who worked alone in Bairan Village, this smithy seemed like it would have dozens of blacksmiths working together.

'The leader of dozens of blacksmiths should be at least an intermediate level blacksmith?'

If so, he would recognize me and treat me favorably. Unlike Bairan Village, I would learn how to make items in a good environment. I entered the smithy excitedly while imagining the energetic sound of hammering and the hot heat.

However, the smithy I entered seemed bleak. I couldn't hear any hammering sounds, and there were no indications of any people about.

"W-What?" I looked around in a confused manner and saw a pot-bellied man sleeping in a corner with an empty alcohol bottle beside him. I didn't know if he was sleeping or dead, so I approached him quietly and shook him awake.

"Hey. Hey!"

"...Eh? What?"

Fortunately, he wasn't dead. The pot-bellied man made an expression of annoyance and opened his eyes. Then he turned towards me and asked, "What did you come here for?"

“I want to learn how to make the best selling item in this village. Can I get your help?”

The elderly man looked at me with a ridiculing expression. “This place ended a long time ago. After the Mero Company bought the blacksmith stores and commercial areas, they bulk sell items at a low price so the customers turned away from this place. Yet you came here to learn how to make items? Are you sure you want to perish with me?”

Right at that moment...

The smithy door opened, and a group of rough looking people rushed in.

“Hey, Old Man! You still haven’t decided? Will you hand this building over to us? Won’t you be able to buy alcohol every day until you die then?”

...What was it this time? I felt like I was caught up in another troublesome incident.

CHAPTER 23

“Hey, Old Man! You still haven’t decided? Will you hand this building over to us? Then won’t you be able to buy alcohol every day until you die?”

The men who entered the smithy were rough looking and their physique was good. They reminded me of the employees from Mother’s Heart is Happy. They took a heavy-handed attitude as they handed a sheet of paper to the elderly blacksmith.

‘What’s this?’

It was a contract to sell this building and the land to the Mero Company. I instinctively realized it.

‘If I analyze this based on my recent successes and troubles, it’s likely that I’ll get involved in a stupid quest as I stand here.’

That absolutely couldn’t be allowed to happen. The urgent thing right now was to earn money by making items.

‘There’s no time to waste on unwanted quests.’

I admired my brain’s quick thinking and moved to avoid this situation. But how many things ever went according to my will? I only managed to move a few steps before I was caught by the gangsters.

“Hey, where did this newbie come from? You trying to sneak into our business like a rat?”

They started to question me in an intimidating manner.

“Did you come to steal the contents of our contract? You, are you a spy? Did the Skaner Company send you?”

Why did I get caught up in the contents of that piece of paper? This was really some useless curiosity.

‘I should’ve just stayed in the rear and avoided looking at them.’

I shrugged as if to say ‘Spy, me? What are you talking about? It isn’t like that, so don’t worry about me. I just want to go my own way.’

But they continued to act tough.

Gulp.

‘Damn.’

My saliva dried up and sweat beaded up on my forehead. I remembered my low-level days in Satisfy.

Was it due to the fearful memories of being a bread shuttle, or being threatened by teenage gangster NPCs in the back alleys? Or maybe it was because they resembled the employees from Mother’s Heart is Happy Financial Services.

I reflexively shrank back from the group; I couldn’t cope with this.

‘I should behave.’

Violent NPCs didn’t fear the law. It was entirely possible to be severely injured or killed if I even so much as touched these guys. Of course, I could report the NPCs to the guards, but their fists were closer than the law was. It might be possible if I was stronger or quick enough to flee from this building. However, that wasn’t the case so it was better to avoid irritating them.

‘Judging by their appearance and atmosphere, they aren’t back alley bullies. They don’t just smoke cigarettes and use bread shuttles.’

The Mero Company was the second largest business company in the Eternal Kingdom. They wouldn’t give jobs to losers. These assholes were all gangsters.

‘Based on their equipment, they’re at least level 35.’

Gangsters over level 35! How many people have they hurt and frightened in order to level up? I couldn’t imagine all the sins that these people had committed.

‘There are five of them... In contrast, I am only level 3. While my stats are superior compared to those of my level, they’re all still around level 20. Not only that I am alone as well.’

To make matters worse, I was unarmed. I would only lose if I got into a fight with them.

‘Yes, let’s act prudently and discard my pride.’

As soon as I organized my thoughts, I smiled as brightly as possible and explained, “I’m not here to spy on you. I am just a customer passing by. So you don’t have to be so vigilant. Heheh.”

Acting subservient to NPCs! I felt no shame. The hand of the man holding my shoulder loosened slightly.

“Customer? At this smithy?”

“Yes.”

“Hoh? A customer of this smithy...”

The grip of the man’s hand on my shoulder strengthened again.

‘Ouch, it hurts.’

I frowned due to the pain. Curse words almost popped out of my mouth, but I remained patient. Instead of scolding him, I tried my best to maintain my smile. Why? Otherwise, I might get hit! There was an old saying that you couldn’t spit when there was a smile on the other person’s face.

The gangsters eyed me with suspicion.

“The street operated by the Mero Company has a large number of weapons stores, so why would you come to a smithy like this? Isn’t this strange?”

“There might be many weapons stores, but this is the only smithy. I don’t want to buy a weapon, but instead find a blacksmith for production-related work. Therefore, it was inevitable that I came here. Hehe, I had no idea this smithy was troubled since I am new to Winston.”

I could debut as a lead actor right away and would be the perfect candidate for the New Actor Award at the end of year ceremonies. My appearance and tone were subservient. I continued to smile and the suspicious gangster released me.

“I somehow feel like hitting you, but you’re a blacksmith as well? Umm, indeed. You’re so weak that you can’t be a spy... Okay, get out of here. Don’t think about coming here again.”

Did he want to hit me? Did I look poor and weak? These scum thought they could make fun of me just because of how I looked? The fury in my heart boiled over. However, be patient.

“Hehe, thank you for believing in me. I’ll be going now.”

I was able to keep the smile until the last minute as I quickly headed out of the smithy. Then the old blacksmith’s angry voice was heard behind me, “Yes... there’s nothing to be gained from dragging this dirty work out too long. It is better to avoid such things. I’m too tired now.”

As I paused for a moment, the old man blinked his bloodshot eyes. It was to stop the tears from falling down.

“Give me that contract. I’ll sign it as you wish.”

“Eh? R-Really?”

“Ohh! Good thinking Old Man!”

“It took a long time, but you have finally made a wise decision.”

The gangsters cheered at the old man’s words. It was like a festival. The one who seemed to be the leader handed the contract to the old man.

“All you have to do is sign. Then you can take it easy.”

“.....”

The old man gazed at the contract and hesitated for a moment before reaching towards the contract with trembling hands. At that moment, tears fell from the old man’s eyes. “Ahh! This is the end of my seven generation family business! I won’t be able to face my ancestors after death!”

The sight of the sad and depressed old man was unbearable. But the gangsters mocked him instead of comforting him,

“You abruptly stopped blacksmithing, so isn’t it natural for the customers to turn away? And Old Man, didn’t you have a child? Your only son died, so you turned to the bottles? You don’t have a successor, so once you die, your family line will naturally be cut off. You were defending something that had no value. Didn’t your debts just increase? Pathetic, truly pathetic.”

“You! Don’t mention my son with that vulgar mouth!”

“Why the hell are you so loud? Do you want to be scolded like last time?”

The gangster called ‘Johnson’ threatened to hit the old man. I was angry when I saw Johnson.

‘Isn’t that an old man? Not only did he speak rudely to the old man, but threatening to beat him up...’

At that moment, a gangster called ‘Um’ spoke, “Look, the contract should be completed today.”

Then the one called ‘Praga’ jumped in like an excited foal, “No, I’m mad. Didn’t we have to wait a few months for the old man to accept while that old man refused? Think about how much we suffered because of him!”

The gangster called ‘Neil’ continued, “I agree... Fuck, we couldn’t even properly handle an old man. We received less pay on the scheduled date because of this.”

Then the silent leader, ‘Veil’ smiled coldly and said, “That’s right, you must compensate us for the damages we received.”

Veil slapped the old man’s cheek and said, “Hey Old Man, once you receive the money for selling this smithy, half of it will be used to pay off your debt, while the other half will be handed to us. Isn’t it obvious to compensate us for the damages you caused?”

“You dog bastards!” The old man, Khan, angrily replied to Veil.

“Hey, you don’t have a wife or son to feed, so why do you need a large amount of money? You should help the poor, young people like me.”

“.....”

My insides were boiling with anger.

‘I don’t respect senior citizens much, but...’

When I used public transportation such as the bus or subway, I never yielded my seat to the elderly. I paid the same taxes, so I also had the right to enjoy the seat! No matter how burdensome their gazes were, I never gave way.

‘But...’

I didn’t insult or tease the elderly, unlike these gangsters. I was really angry.

‘Young pups treating grandmothers and grandfathers like this... it is terrible.’

So? Should I help the old man, despite my low level?

NO~ NO~ I don’t have a sense of justice. Why should I help others? I couldn’t think of any benefits. In my childhood, I was disgusted by superheroes instead of admiring them like everyone else.

‘Why are they getting hurt trying to save others? Are they crazy?’

I couldn’t understand the heroes who sacrificed themselves to defeat the villain. My young self cringed as I watched their unconditional sacrifice. So when the neighborhood kids played as heroes, I acted as the villain. Once I became the villain, I enjoyed the pleasure I got from harassing my friends who played the role of heroes. I showed sense by pretending to die at the end of the game, meaning the other children didn’t feel any resentment.

‘When I think about it, I have been like this since childhood. Yes, from the beginning, I closed my eyes whenever I saw injustice.’

So I turned away from the old man who was being humiliated and about to lose the business that had been in his family for seven generations. Sure, some regrets remained.

‘The situation has become like this, so it is impossible to make items in this smithy. If I want to move villages, I have to pay for that scamming expensive carriage again? Do I really have to move villages once more? No, there is no need to. I will just hunt and raise my level until the new owner of this smithy starts work.’

Wait?

‘Don’t I need equipment to hunt? This damn thing! I stored my sword and armor in the warehouse. My 50 silver!’

My stress levels weren’t a joke. My stomach hurt when I thought about all the money that was flying away. Why was my life so twisted? Uhh... I’m getting a stomach ache. I should leave here as soon as possible.’

But strangely, my feet didn’t move.

‘That old man... is this okay?’

Ah! Really! Fuck!

Maybe it was because I witnessed the dirty work. No matter how much I dreamed about a life that was far from good, I still had the basic fundamentals of a human. It was too much for my conscience to ignore the old man surrounded by gangsters.

‘No, why risk myself for someone else? Am I stupid?’

I was fully aware that I should turn a blind eye to this. So why was I hesitating?

‘When did I become nosy? This behavior isn’t like me. I’ve always closed my eyes to injustice.’

The moment I braced myself to leave the smithy.

[Your anger levels are at their peak after witnessing gangsters commit wrongdoings towards a blacksmith.]

[The quest ‘Blacksmith’s Rage’ has been created.]

CHAPTER 24

[Blacksmith's Rage]

Difficulty: B

As Pagma's descendant, you have inherited Pagma's will as well as his techniques. You have Pagma's humanitarian ideology of using 'blacksmithing to benefit other people.'

You can never forgive the Mero Company and its minions, who oppress the old and powerless blacksmith.

Help the blacksmith Khan, who had fallen for the tricks of the Mero Company and lost his customers.

Quest Clear Conditions: Get rid of the Mero Company's minions and destroy the smithy transfer contract.

Clear Reward: Blacksmith Khan's alcoholic symptoms will improve. Affinity with Khan will reach the maximum.

* Khan was originally an excellent blacksmith. But after his business was ruined due to the tricks of the Mero Company and he was subjected to severe stress, an alcohol dependency was created. He is currently an incompetent old man, but if he improves from his alcoholism, he will surely regain his status as a great blacksmith. At that time, he will figure out your identity and help you greatly...

Quest Acceptance Reward: The skill 'Blacksmith's Rage' is created.

Quest Failure: A few days later, Khan will die and all quests related to him will be permanently destroyed.

"Eh?"

The blacksmith's ideology?

"Is this a parody of humanitarianism?"

The motto of the legendary blacksmith Pagma!

“...Is there a hidden class that will appear after eating only garlic for 100 days?”

No, now wasn't the time to joke around.

“This situation is a quest.”

It was as I expected. A ruined smithy and blacksmith. The sudden appearance of gangsters was the precursor to the beginning of a new quest.

[Would you like to accept the quest?]

There were five enemies. Their level was estimated to be 35 or higher. On the other hand, I was alone and only level 3. I was also unharmed because I left my sword and armor in the warehouse.

Should I refuse the quest? No.

“I accept.”

There was no reason for me to refuse this quest.

Even though I was level 3, my stats made me equivalent to a level 20. I also had the skill ‘Legendary Blacksmith’s Patience.’ It was a tremendous skill that increased my concentration, stamina, and defense to the peak for an hour. But was that all? I had the passive skill that allowed me to become invincible for five seconds if my health was at the minimum.

“In fact, I’m not without a weapon.”

I opened my inventory. I took out one arrow that I had left behind as a souvenir.

[Special Jaffa Arrow]

Rating: Epic

Attack Power: 35~42

An arrow made by a craftsman with great skill and potential but lacking in experience and reputation.

Due to the effect of combining jaffa with steel, it has extremely high penetration and ignores some of the enemy's defense.

* Has a certain chance of ignoring the enemy's defense.

Weight: 0.1

Arrows were consumables. But that was only when fired by a bow.

"If I hold it and use it as a dagger, it won't be a consumable."

In fact, there were many cases when arrows were retrieved and reused. It was said that most arrows could be reused except when it was too damaged by the target, but I didn't know because I had no experience shooting the bow.

'I thought it was strange that arrows were so expensive so I grabbed a passerby. Thanks to that, I realized that arrows weren't always consumables. Huhut, information was power! I shouldn't neglect the impact of gathering information in the future.'

I smiled with satisfaction and examined the gangsters closely. They were holding threatening weapons like axes, swords, and maces while wearing leather armor.

'The heavens are helping me.'

It might be different if they were wearing iron armor. However, I could cause serious damage if I stabbed the leather armor several times with the Jaffa Arrow.

'This arrow is something I made with my heart. Its value couldn't be compared with normal arrows. I might have the attack power of a level 20 but I trust this arrow. Due to the option to ignore defense, I will be able to fill up the offensive gap. There is also the countless combat experiences I have accumulated in my days as a warrior.'

My stats that were higher than my level, a suitable weapon, a fraudulent skill and combat senses acquired from past experience. I believed that these four elements

were enough to clear the quest.

‘It is a very low possibility.’

Would I willingly accept a quest that was more likely to fail than succeed? It was obvious.

First, there was no penalty if the quest failed. The NPC Khan would die and all quests associated with him permanently destroyed, but it wasn’t something I should be afraid of since I didn’t know what the quests were.

Secondly, I was rewarded just by accepting the quest.

[The quest has been accepted.]

[Due to the quest acceptance, the skill ‘Blacksmith’s Rage’ has been acquired.]

The quest acceptance reward was different from the quest clear reward. It was a skill I received just by accepting the quest. Who would resist such a quest? I immediately opened the skills window to check the new skill.

[Blacksmith’s Rage]

Lv. 1

Increases attack power by 10% and attack speed by 30% for 20 seconds.

Skill Mana Cost: 50

Skill Cooldown Time: 60 seconds

‘A-Amazing!’

Production-related classes such as blacksmiths were said to not be able to learn combat skills. However, now I have learned a combat buff just by accepting a blacksmith related quest! Furthermore, its performance was enormous.

‘Isn’t this a lot better than the combat buff skills I learned as a warrior?’

The warrior buff skill that I used raised my attack power by 20% for a certain duration, and the cooldown time was three minutes. But the buff I just learn increased by attack power and attack speed, and the cooldown time was one minute.

‘Isn’t this a windfall? Kukuk... Oh, is this the hidden quest that I’ve heard about? However, isn’t the quest difficulty too low for a hidden quest? Maybe this... it is likely to be a linked quest. The quests owned by Blacksmith Khan are probably linked quests. This is a real hit.’

As soon as I realized the importance of Blacksmith Khan, I had an obligation to do my best to clear the quest.

‘Thanks to the new skill, the possibility of clearing the quest is even higher... Good.’

I decided to approach the gangsters.

“What the, this guy?” The gangsters tilted their heads as I came back instead of leaving.

I pointed the arrow towards them. Then I explained to them the biggest reason why I accepted this quest.

“You crossed the line. I am also indifferent to elderly people, but not as much as you. You don’t have to feel respect towards elderly people, but shouldn’t you maintain the minimum of courtesies? You should take care of your education, you bastards. I can’t forgive you.”

I wasn’t trying to imitate the apostle of justice. I just didn’t like people like these!

“Blame the fact that you look like Mother’s Heart is Happy employees.”

As I stepped closer, the gangsters started to grab their weapons.

“You bastard! This brat dares say such things to us? Eh? No, did something suddenly happen to this brat? Hey you! Do you want to go to hell? Huh?”

“This bastard didn’t appreciate the fact that we let you go...”

Indeed, lawless NPCs were fearsome. They instantly showed an intention to kill me.

They were truly people who had committed numerous evils.

‘They are too formidable.’

But there was no reason to avoid them due to fear. Right now, these people weren’t the objects of fear. They are targets that must be defeated to clear the quest. The ambition of a warrior was boiling inside of me.

I snorted with derision towards the gangsters and raised my hand. “Stop your useless talking and come on.”

The gangsters reacted immediately.

“This crazy bastard!”

“Get him! Hold on to him for me! No, kill him! Just kill him.”

The red-faced gangsters rushed towards me. There were a total of five opponents. In a wide open space, I would be surrounded and die instantly. I had identified the terrain of the smithy ahead of time and headed for the stairs leading towards the second floor. The staircase was wide enough for two adult men to stand side by side.

I stood in the middle of it with the arrow.

“Anyone who wants to be stung should come up here.”

The gangsters flinched when I took the geographical advantage, then belatedly confirmed the identity of the weapon in my hand.

“What is that? An arrow?”

“Puhahaha. Do you want to deal with us with that arrow? Where is your bow? Eh? Did you drop it on your mother’s skirt, Newbie?”

“Anyway, a blacksmith can’t use a bow. They don’t handle weapons very well. So it is no wonder he needs to swing an arrow. He is seriously young.”

These guys were belittling me! Among them, Johnson had the most vicious nature so he rushed forward first. “I will cut this blacksmith up like a bear.”

I faced Johnson, who had charged forward ignorantly like a wild boar, and used the skill I had just learned.

“Blacksmith’s Rage.”

[Blacksmith’s Rage has been activated. Your attack power and attack speed will increase significantly for 20 seconds.]

At the top of the screen, a message with ‘20 seconds’ popped up. It was a notification window that showed the duration of the skill. I confirmed that the skill was successfully cast and quickly thrust out my arm.

Papat!

It was quicker than Johnson could swing his axe. My arrow pierced his chest twice. Large weapons had the advantage of high damage and durability, but they had a fatal disadvantage of slow attack speed. On the other hand, my attack was quick due to the weightless arrow. In addition, I used Blacksmith’s Rage and was able to overwhelm Johnson with speed.

[Critical!]

[The effect of the Special Jaffa arrow is activated, meaning the enemy’s defense is completely ignored.]

“Ke...heok!”

It was only two attacks, but the full power was unleashed. One hit was a critical strike, while the other one ignored the defense due to the optional effect of the Special Jaffa Arrow. At this moment, I was sure that luck was following me. I never imagined that an arrow could deal damage like this.

“H-how...?”

Johnson had a disbelieving expression on his face as the arrow pierced the leather

armor. Then he coughed up blood and rolled down the stairs. He turned into a grey light and several messages popped up before my eyes.

[You have defeated Winston's outlaw, Johnson.]

[Reputation in Winston Village has increased by 60.]

[Your relationship with the Winston outlaws has become hostile.]

[The Winston outlaws will try to kill you when they find you.]

[4,300 experience has been acquired.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

"Wow."

I expected the gangster to be at least level 35. As if to prove my guess right, I gained five levels just from Johnson's death.

'I defeated a level 35 enemy in just two hits?'

I couldn't believe it myself. Even if it was a critical hit and the enemy's defense was ignored, I never expected to do it in only two hits.

'These guys, do they have less health compared to their appearance?'

It was a good explanation. Considering their aggressive tendencies, it was likely that the gangsters had focused their stats on strength.

'Okay.'

I felt more hope that I could clear this quest.

“Status window.”

Name: Grid

Level: 8 (125/1,400)

Class: Pagma’s Descendant

- * The probability of adding additional options when making items will increase.
- * The probably of item enhancement will increase.
- * All equipment items can be worn unconditionally. However, there is a penalty depending on the rating of the item.

Title: One who Became a Legend

- * Abnormal conditions don’t work well on you.
- * You won’t die when health is at the minimum.
- * Easily acknowledged.

Health: 316/316 Mana: 87/87

Strength: 24 Stamina: 22 Agility: 16 Intelligence: 29

Dexterity: 55 Persistence: 21

Composure: 14 Indomitable: 16 Dignity: 14 Insight: 14

Stat Points: 110

Weight: 842/1,000

I gained five more levels, so now I had 110 stat points.

‘This is the right timing to distribute my stat points.’

I didn’t hesitate to invest all my stat points in strength and agility.

[You have invested 50 points in strength. Is this correct?]

“Yes.”

[Once the points are invested, it can't be reversed. Do you want to proceed?]

“Yes.”

[You have invested 60 points in agility. Is this correct?]

“Yes.”

The warning statements popped up and my strength and agility greatly increased. The other gangsters were surprised to see their companion suddenly die and couldn't climb the stairs.

“W-W-What is that guy? How did he handle Johnson so easily?”

“Johnson wasn't vigilant and allowed himself to be stabbed in the heart twice.”

“Still, isn't that bastard's weapon just an arrow? It wasn't shot from a bow, but a hand wielded arrow broke through leather armor and did such damage? Nonsense. It is impossible.”

“...This blacksmith must be so strong that he doesn't depend on weapons. Maybe he isn't a blacksmith in the first place. He is a warrior. I'm sure of this.”

“What does that... Maybe he just looks weak.”

“Don't just pay attention to the outward appearance.”

The gangsters watched me carefully. Blacksmith's Rage only lasted 10 more seconds so I provoked them.

“What are you doing? Aren't you attacking? Isn't it four of you against one of me? You

third-rate, hulking gangster scum.”

“Third-rate? What is this jerk seeing?”

“Praga, wait!”

Despite the calls from his companions, the gangster called Praga fell for the taunt and rushed. This time, the weapon was a huge mace. The attack speed was very slow, just like Johnson who used the axe.

Kwajajak!

He ran up the staircase and the mace aimed for my face. I avoided it as much as possible and pushed the arrow forward.

Papapat!

My increased agility was immediately effective. This time, I was able to strike the arrow three times before the enemy could attack once.

“Ahhhhhh!”

Praga was stabbed three times in the chest and retreated.

‘Dammit.’

This time, there wasn’t a critical hit. In addition, the optional effect of the Special Jaffa Arrow wasn’t activated. Was that why? My attack power had increased thanks to the 50 points invested in strength, but Praga didn’t die.

“Hey, are you okay?”

“Kuooock... it isn’t enough to kill me.”

“Hmm... I guess it was just a coincidence that he took care of Johnson in two hits. The attack power seems weaker than I expected.”

Little by little, the gangsters started to identify my strength. Then Veil explained to his men, “The thing we need to watch out for now is his attack speed. He is overwhelmingly faster than us because we use large weapons, so fighting one-on-one

is definitely a disadvantage.”

“Then what?”

“What should we do? It is simple.”

Veil winked and they stood as a group in front of the staircase. Then he spoke to me, who was standing alone on the staircase. “I won’t go up to grab you. You can’t stay up there forever. Won’t you eventually have to come down? Then I will kill you.”

Heok... they were quite smart.

‘If they were monsters, they would move without thinking.’

My plan to take advantage of the terrain was all in vain.

‘There are four people remaining. One of them is seriously injured, but he can still fight. Damn... no matter what method I think of, it is too dangerous to deal with them all at once. How can I clear this quest?’

I could be satisfied with the fact that I acquired a new skill through this quest. I was curious about the linked quests and rewards that would be received from Blacksmith Khan, but should I take the risk?

‘It is wiser to forcibly quit the quest by running away, instead of dying. But...’

My eyes looked somewhere else. I flinched the moment I met the eyes of the old man standing in the corner, Khan. Was it due to the expectations, hope, and gratitude in the eyes of the old man looking at me?

It was like he was looking at a hero.

‘Don’t gaze at me with such eyes. I’m not a hero.’

I tried to ignore the old man’s gaze. Then I stopped just before logging out.

‘Just accepting the quest gave me a new skill. I am 100% certain that this is a hidden quest. The rewards of the linked quests received from that old man must be beyond imagination. Isn’t it stupid to give up on a rare quest that I might not encounter again?’

Yes, I should try it. I headed down the stairs. I was immediately besieged by the gangsters waiting for me.

‘My defense is close to zero. My health is also small. If I allow these guys to attack, I will be killed in two or three hits, even if they aren’t fatal wounds. The important thing isn’t to fight as quickly as possible. Carefully, carefully.’

I concentrated as much as possible, confirmed the cooldown time of Blacksmith’s Rage was over and used the skill again.

“Blacksmith’s Rage.”

[Blacksmith’s Rage has been activated. Your attack power and attack speed will increase significantly for 20 seconds.]

Okay. Next.

“Legendary Blacksmith’s Patience.”

[Nothing happens.]

“Eh...?”

The skill didn’t activate? I was confused and hurriedly opened the skill window. Then I read the detailed explanation of the Legendary Blacksmith’s Patience skill.

[Legendary Blacksmith’s Patience]

Vitality, defense, and dexterity will rise by 200% for one hour.

* This skill doesn’t consume mana.

* This skill can’t be used intentionally. It was naturally be triggered if you continue to persevere.

“...Ah, you.”

This damn thing... A conditional activation skill?

‘I should’ve read the skill description... It is like not reading the fine print.’

As one of the factors that I believed in disappeared, the gangsters narrowed the distance with their weapons.

“Hey, are you ready to go to hell?”

“I will make you pay for hurting and killing my companions.”

I was screwed.

CHAPTER 25

“Go to hell! Johnson’s enemy!”

Buuuung.

The explosive sound of the surrounding enemies attacking me was enough to cause pain and sweat to flow down.

Kwang! Kwajajak!

These were attacks with the power to break a wall with one blow! I was able to avoid the attacks a few times due to the slow speed and simple trajectory, but I wondered how long I could maintain this concentration. Then the enemies started to use their heads.

“Attack at the same time.”

“Ohhhhhh!”

Different weapons simultaneously struck out from every direction.

[You have received 150 damage.]

[You have received 163 damage.]

“Urghh...”

My health gauge reached the bottom with just two hits and had only 23 health left.

‘Crazy. They weren’t even critical hits.’

I pulled out a potion from my inventory and drank it. It was an intermediate health potion that restored 1,500 health at once.

‘My health is considerably less than 1,500, but an intermediate potion is the lowest

grade potion I have. It would've been nice if I had an inferior potion...'

The potion reuse time was 20 seconds, so I had to defend myself from attacks for at least 20 seconds. But now the enemies had started systematically linking their strikes. It became harder.

"We have been fighting together for 10 years. No matter what you try, you will eventually go to hell!"

I moved to the side in order to avoid the big sword that would take off my head, then an attack aimed for my knees, as if they had predicted my movements. My battle senses, developed from my days as a warrior, let out a warning.

This was unavoidable!

"Kuk!"

I aimed the arrow downwards.

Kaaang!

The Special Jaffa Arrow accurately hit the mace in an attempt to shift the orbit. But an arrow was a very lightweight weapon. It was impossible for a light weapon to shift the orbit of the large mace that weighed several kilograms.

Kwajak!

"Kuaaaak!"

The mace hit half of my knee, dealing a critical blow.

[You have received 200 damage.]

[Your left leg is severely damaged. Movement speed has decreased by 40%. The ability to control your body has decreased.]

As I groaned on the floor, a strike of lightning could be heard above me. If I stayed still, my skull would be caved in.

“Hup!”

I endured the pain and rolled back.

Kakakakak!

The floor where I had been lying just a few seconds ago was smashed to pieces. I stared at the enemies and made a decision.

‘I will act luxuriously today.’

I steeled my heart, pulling out the intermediate strength potion and intermediate agility potion. The price for one was 10 gold. 10 gold was 12,000 won!

‘I’m sorry but it can’t be helped.’

I closed my eyes and poured 20 gold, in other words, 24,000 won, down my throat.

Gulp gulp.

I shed tears as the buff potion was swallowed.

‘Ahh! This potion is more expensive than the sweet and sour pork set!’

I prepared the buff potions for moments of crisis during Earl Ashur’s quest, but I felt such regret that I never used them. Now they were being used to complete a B-grade quest, not a boss monster.

[You have taken the intermediate strength potion. Strength will increase by 50 for five minutes.]

[You have taken the intermediate agility potion. Agility will increase by 50 for five minutes.]

There was a flood of attacks from two directions as the notification windows popped up.

“Son of a bitch! Don’t think that we can’t touch you while you are eating!”

I was able to avoid the two attacks due to my sharp rise in agility, then I gripped the arrow and fought back. But two attacks came from different directions and I was forced to give up.

“Pant pant... r-really horrible.”

I would’ve died if it wasn’t for the intermediate agility potion. It felt like my heart would burst from the extreme tension, and the gangsters were filled with rage once their attacks were over.

“This rotten bastard! How long will you run away?”

“Where is your momentum from your first attack? What a shameful brat! Fight fair.”

The four of them were ganging up on my lone self, yet they were complaining about fighting fairly?

“Hey, you fuckers have no conscience! Let’s do it one against one.”

“Won’t we still win in a one-on-one fight?”

“Then bring it on!”

“Bullshit! Don’t you know that being able to fight in groups is a virtue?”

Chwaruruk!

The flail stretched out like a whip.

Tatatang! Tang!

I hit it with the arrow and barely managed to spin my body. I felt a hot pain as a greatsword scratched my side.

[You have received 30 damage.]

Fortunately, I succeeded in avoiding it. Once the crisis passed, I tried to continue the conversation to buy time for my potion reuse time to end.

“Hey guys, let’s talk about it honestly. Shouldn’t you know by now that I’m not a pushover?”

“.....”

The gangsters didn’t want to admit it, but they didn’t refute my words. I made a suggestion, “Hand over the contract and then no one will die anymore.”

“What?”

The gangsters were furious.

“Don’t play games! You think you can get out of here alive after killing Johnson? Don’t worry about the contract. You must die here.”

“What? Is it hard to come forward? Won’t you regret it? You guys really can leave here alive if you hand over the contract.”

“Hahat! Stop talking nonsense! A guy who broke his leg is spouting these words. From the very beginning, we could leave here alive! You are the only one who will die here.”

“Hrmm, will that really happen?”

During the conversation, the reuse time for my potions had reset. I turned away from the gangsters and sneakily drank the potion. At the same time, my health and the wound on my leg recovered.

‘Now.’

The gangsters thought I was still seriously injured. I used that to sneak attack one of them.

“N-No?”

They couldn’t respond properly because they thought my leg was still injured. I pierced one person accurately with the arrow.

[Critical!]

[The effect of the Special Jaffa arrow is activated, meaning the enemy’s defense is

completely ignored.]

“Keeok...!”

[You have defeated Winston’s outlaw, Neil.]

[Reputation in Winston Village has increased by 60.]

[4,300 experience has been acquired.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

‘Good!’

The gangster stabbed in the belly couldn’t even scream properly as he turned into grey light. The eyes of the gangsters shook as they lost another companion.

“You... you bastard! How did your leg suddenly become better? D-Don’t tell me you drank a potion?”

“... Didn’t you see me drinking it?”

“You stupid bastard! You should fight with your own body!”

“Bullshit! Can you really say that? You are gangsters trying to bully an innocent citizen!”

“You...! Kill! Kill that brat as soon as possible! He is like a cockroach, so keep attacking until he is dead.”

“Isn’t he just a druggie? I will crush him!”

The extremely angry Veil commanded his men. “The ‘You will Die’ formation!”

It was the worst naming sense. In any case, the villains received Veil's command and unleashed a barrage of attacks.

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Chukak. Bam!

The murder techniques that didn't consider defense ran rampant. Even if my arrow was aimed at their hearts, they didn't try to defend or avoid. They kept attacking and attacking.

"Kuk!"

Even if my arrow stabbed them, they didn't stop attacking. I instantly found myself on the defensive.

[You have received 203 damage.]

[You have received 180 damage.]

Chwaruruk! Buuuong. Kwaang!

Like a snake persistently following me on a blocked path, the greatsword with a wide range of attack gave me a big crisis. Even if I avoided the mace, my balance would become off because the mace would break the ground or walls.

There were 13 seconds left on my potion reuse time and my health was at the bottom.

'This is my limit. I can't endure anymore.'

Unless the Legendary Blacksmith's Patience skill activated and my defense and health were strengthened, there was no way to overcome this crisis.

'The end...'

The moment I was about to give up on the quest... I suddenly had a thought.

'Why am I depending on potions and skills?'

Was I a warrior? No. I was Pagma's Descendant.

'Where am I right now?'

A smithy.

'I'm so stupid... Why didn't I think of this earlier?'

I noticed the various weapons and armor displayed all over the room. A number of things popped into my head.

"Khan!"

Khan, the elder blacksmith standing in the corner, responded instantly to my call.

"Speak."

I asked him, "Do you want to keep this smithy?"

"Of course! I already gave up, but changed my mind thanks to you. If you help me, I will be able to keep this place!"

I liked the cool answer.

"Hey, what are you doing now? Why are you chatting with that old man instead of fighting? Are you thinking of some trick?"

Kwa kwa kwang!

The gangsters didn't stop the offensive. I avoided the attack and threw my arrow at the largest of them.

Swaeek!

The quickly thrown Special Jaffa Arrow...

Whether he sensed the crisis or if he was confident, Praga changed his attitude and started defending.

[Critical!]

Chaaeng!

“Wah!”

A critical appeared the moment the arrow struck the mace, and its heavy power made Praga instantly back up. However, the other two gangsters didn't care and struck. I turned around and ran away from them.

“Kuhahahaha! Stupid person! You threw away your weapon.”

The gangsters saw me running away unarmed and chased after me. Praga overcame the crisis of the flying arrow and sighed with relief. I never looked back at them. I ran forward with all my strength. Then I ran up the stairs and reached the second floor.

There was a brilliantly shining full plate armor and a super large greatsword that was 3m in length.

I shouted toward Khan on the ground floor.

“Khan, lend me this equipment!”

“B-But...”

“I will give them back at the end of the fight! If you want to keep your smithy, give me permission!”

Taking away the items without the owner's consent would label me a criminal. I waited for Khan's permission, but he paused in a frustrating manner.

“Not just anyone can use that equipment! It is better to lend you the leather armor and blacksmith hammer over here. That is the ideal equipment for you.”

“No, just lend this to me.”

“B-but that battle gear...”

“Kihahaha! I've finally caught you. Die!”

Without realizing it, the enemies had neared me. Khan finally realized the urgency of the situation and nodded. “Y-Yes. If you can use it then feel free to!”

“Good. You should’ve said it sooner.”

[Due to your class characteristics, you have equipped Dainsleif (Reproduction).]

[A penalty is applied because the item conditions aren’t met.]

[Attack power of Dainsleif (Reproduction) will decrease by 20%. Only half of the option effects will be applied.]

[The penalties will be reduced if your understanding of Dainsleif (Reproduction) increases.]

[Due to your class characteristics, you have equipped Valhalla.]

[A penalty is applied because the item conditions aren’t met.]

[Defense of Valhalla will decrease by 20%. Only half of the option effects will be applied.]

[The penalties will be reduced if your understanding of Valhalla increases.]

CHAPTER 26

I felt like a mountain after equipping the gold armor. With the giant sword in my hand, I felt brave enough to even cut at a dragon.

The gangsters were swinging their weapons. There was no need for evasion.

Kwang! Kwajajak!

[The enemy's damage has been neutralized.]

The enemies' attacks had a good momentum, but they couldn't even deal a small scratch to my armor. My body didn't feel any slight fluctuations. Rather, the weapons of the gangsters were damaged.

"W-What?"

"What is this...?"

The gangsters lived in the lawless world so their warning instincts were unsurpassed. At this moment, the gangsters felt despair.

"T-This is ridiculous...!"

I grinned in a devilish manner at the confused gangsters. "Have you heard of the item effect?"

Drugs? Skill? I didn't need to rely on such things from the beginning. There were all types of battle gear piled up in the smithy, and as Pagma's Descendant, I could use all of it!

Clink!

I grabbed the handle of the greatsword with both hands and tightened my waist as much as possible before lifting it up with all of my strength. I didn't need to use any techniques. I used just the momentum of the greatsword to wreak havoc to anything

in its path.

Seokeok!

There was a refreshing feeling in my chest as the sword cut through the enemies. With one strike, the bodies of the gangsters turned into grey light.

[You have defeated Winston's outlaw, Praga.]

[Reputation in Winston Village has increased by 60.]

[4,300 experience has been acquired.]

[You have defeated Winston's outlaw, Um.]

[Reputation in Winston Village has increased by 60.]

[4,300 experience has been acquired.]

[You have defeated Winston's outlaw, Veil.]

[Reputation in Winston Village has increased by 100.]

[6,600 experience has been acquired.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Quest success!]

[Affinity with Khan has risen to the maximum.]

The tremendous rewarding sentences that kept appearing. I didn't take the time to enjoy the pleasure.

"This weapon and armor..."

I immediately used the Legendary Blacksmith's Appraisal skill.

[The blacksmith who becomes a legend that appraises items with an excellent discerning eye. If a hidden feature exists in the target item, it will be found.]

[Dainsleif (Reproduction)]

Rating: Unique

Durability: 500/500 Attack Power: 451~635 Attack Speed: -8%

- * Additional damage equal to 10% of the target's current defense will be dealt.
- * The greater the number of enemies, the greater the damage.
- * The skill 'Golden Flash' has been generated.

A work created by Albatino, the first human to receive the nickname of 'craftsman' before Pagma's era. He attempted to reproduce the mythical weapon, Dainsleif.

While far lacking compared to the original Dainsleif, he succeeded in restoring some of its features, making it a masterpiece of its own.

It was acclaimed as a 'masterpiece of human history' by the founder of the Eternal Kingdom and king of the north, Loran.

The legendary blacksmith Pagma is said to have received great inspiration from Albatino's work.

User Restriction: Level 250 or higher. More than 1,800 strength. Advanced Sword Mastery.

Weight: 1,580

[A hidden function doesn't exist.]

[You still don't have enough knowledge and experience to understand the material, the production method, and the intentions of the maker of Dainsleif (Reproduction).]

[You have no understanding of Dainsleif (Reproduction).]

[Valhalla]

Rating: Unique

Durability: 701/701 Defense: 872 Movement Speed: -5%

* 20% increase in health recovery.

* If health falls below 10%, a shield will be generated for 5 seconds that will absorb 3,000 damage.

* Increases defense by 10% against cutting and stabbing attacks.

* Magic resistance +180

A work created by Albatino, the first human to receive the nickname of 'craftsman' before Pagma's era. He aimed to create a walking fortress.

It was acclaimed as a 'masterpiece of human history' by the founder of the Eternal Kingdom and king of the north, Loran.

The legendary blacksmith Pagma is said to have received great inspiration from Albatino's work.

User Restrictions: Level 250 or higher. More than 800 strength. More than 1,000 stamina. Advanced Heavy Armor Mastery.

Weight: 1,712

[A hidden function doesn't exist.]

[You still don't have enough knowledge and experience to understand the materials, the production method and the intentions of the maker of Valhalla.]

[You have no understanding of Valhalla.]

“C-Cough...”

W-What were these amazing things? How did such amazing items show up in the smith of a village like this? As the two items shocked me speechless, Khan came up to me and firmly grasped my shoulders.

Then he asked me in a trembling voice, “You... how can you use Dainsleif and Valhalla?”

I couldn’t afford to answer Khan’s question right now. Rather, I was the one with questions.

“Khan, why are such great items in a place like this? Huh? Where did you get this?”

“Heok!”

H-How surprising.

Khan freaked out after listening to my question. I was surprised because it seemed like Khan’s eyes were going to pop out.

‘Wow, this guy isn’t a frog so how can his eyes pop out like this?’

Khan’s eyes popped out of their sockets as he shook me. “You... Do you really know the value of these things?”

“Isn’t it great just by looking at it? The creator is the great Albatino.”

“H-Heok! You figured out who the maker is? P-Perhaps you are...?”

Khan’s face and neck turned red. Then he wobbled like he would collapse.

‘What? Why is he in this state? Is it high blood pressure?’

Did I save him, only for him to die of high blood pressure? No! I can’t let that happen.

“Hey, hey, Old Man! Calm down, calm down! You have to be careful!”

“Ah! Kuoock...”

“Heok? F-Foam? Hey! Old Man. Hey! What is this? Don’t die! I succeeded the quest, right? Then why are you dying? If you have another quest, then give it to me!”

No, wait. If Khan died then what would happen to Dainsleif and Vahalla?

“...Hey, Old Man. Are you well? Damn! You have to live. You must live.”

After returning Dainsleif and Valhalla to their original locations, I carried the old man to the clinic.



The remote village of Winston. However, as the road was built and transportation developed, the village started to develop rapidly.

There were hunting grounds of various levels everywhere, and Winston overflowed with high-quality specialty products and unique quests. These factors meant that its development was endless.

Nowadays, many people came and went. In a survey of new users that a broadcasting station conducted, it was in the top 10 of ‘New Village where I want to Start.’

People envied the residents of Winston after seeing the ever-evolving Winston. The land prices in Winston had increased by as much as 20 times, so it was expected that the residents would be rich.

This was only an illusion for those who didn’t know the truth. The reality was quite different. The lives of the Winston residents weren’t better than ever. This was due to the Mero Company.

The Mero Company had dominated the northern area of the Eternal Kingdom since a long time ago. Valmont, the leader of the Mero Company, predicted the potential of Winston more quickly than anyone else. When it was still a remote village, he bought the land and commercial areas of Winston at a cheap price from the residents.

Therefore, most of Winston’s land and commercial areas were dominated by the Mero Company. It hadn’t officially been promoted to a city yet, but many of Winston’s signboards had the name ‘Mero’ on it. On the other hand, the residents lost their jobs

and suffered from poverty.

The Mero Company's monopoly of Winston. It was a big jackpot for the Mero Company. It was possible to accumulate a huge amount of wealth. The lord wouldn't do anything due to the higher taxes and bribes.

"Indeed, people must have insight."

The owner of the Mero Company, Valmont was happy every day. Most of the profit from the village entered his pockets, so he enjoyed numerous luxuries. However, there was one thing that was raining on Valmont's mood: the existence of the smithy.

According to the decree of the king, cities and villages could only legally have one smithy. It was one of the government's extreme measures to prevent local powers from building massive weapons and strengthening their military capabilities.

Thus, there was one smithy in Winston and the owner of that smithy was a blacksmith called Khan, not the Mero Company. A business that was steady and gained a large amount of money as a weapons business was rare.

The Mero Company offered Khan an astronomical amount to sell the smithy, but he refused, saying it had been in his family for seven generations. It was no use even if Valmont used intimidation.

Valmont had a headache. It was too regretful to give up on the smithy. So he thought hard and came up with an ingenious scheme to put pressure on Khan.

"Buy large quantities of quality weapons and farm equipment from the Taji Blacksmiths. Then sell it to the Winston residents and travelers at a cheap price. The profit? There is no need to worry about that. Sell it cheaply!"

Due to Valmont's order, Khan's blacksmith store lost its competitiveness. The residents and travelers of Winston no longer went to Khan's smithy. The weapons sold at the Mero Company were slightly lower in quality than those sold at Khan's smithy, but they were more diverse and cheaper, causing people to buy from the Mero Company.

In addition, Valmont planned one more thing. It was a plan to trick Khan by hiring an impostor.

“If you increase the scale of the smith, it will instill more confidence in the customers and business will be well again. I will lend you the money at a low-interest rate, so invest your money and grow the scale of the smithy. Show the people of Winston and the Mero Company that you will be successful!”

Khan foolishly believed the scammer. It was because the scammer was a long-time friend of Khan's. Without imagining that his friend had been bribed by Valmont, Khan borrowed money without checking the contract. As a result, the debt snowballed into an amount that he couldn't afford.

Valmont loved the feeling of watching Khan collapse.

“Huhuhu, that smithy will be mine in the near future.”

The last thing Valmont did was hire a group of gangsters and he waited, believing that the smithy would soon be handed over to him. But was Khan as stubborn as a bull? When he saw that Khan never let go of the smithy despite being cornered, an even greater rage boiled up inside Valmont.

“Where are they? I told those gangsters to be firmly prepared if they didn't handle it this time.”

He seriously warned them, so they were motivated to work harder. This time, the smithy would enter his hands...

“What? They're missing?”

“Yes, that's right.”

“Those damn bastards!”

Chachachang!

Valmont overturned the table filled with delicacies at the unexpected report. Then he asked his closest subordinate, Rabbit. “Who recommended those gangsters?”

“Biel.”

“Bring him here right now!”

After a few moments. Valmont quietly asked the trembling Biel, "Weren't you the ones who recommended those gangsters? You said I could believe in them? Then what is this? Not only have they not come back with Khan's smithy in the promised time period, but now they have run away. I even paid them an advance up front. How will you take responsibility for this?"

"I-I'm really sorry. They are the most notorious people in the neighborhood so I recommended..."

"I don't need your apology. Give it to me."

"Huh? W-What...?" Biel asked because he couldn't understand Valmont's meaning.

Valmonth was frustrated with Biel's confusion and spoke bluntly. "You must be stupid if you don't understand while working for a merchant company. Money. Give me money. You are responsible for the advance given to them as well as compensation for the failed commission."

"Y-Yes?! I-I don't have that much money. Please give me one more chance..."

Biel grabbed Valmont's clothing and begged. But Valmont was relentless.

"If you don't have money then create it. Otherwise, I will sell you to the slave market. Then I will be compensated to some extent. Huhuhu."

"M-Master! Please...please!"

"Remove this guy."

Biel had been with Valmont for 10 years. He always worked hard, like a dog. But Valmont didn't tolerate even a single mistake. It was a cruel decision but he didn't care about morals.

'Proud and cruel.'

Rabbit didn't like this about Valmont's nature. But he could earn big money if he worked under Valmont, so Rabbit never betrayed him. After Biel was dragged out, Rabbit was left alone with Valmont and opened his mouth.

"It is hard to believe that the gangsters hired by Biel would run away. They live here in

Winston. They can't throw away their homes easily just for a little bit of money."

"If they didn't run away then what is it? Were they hit by the old man?"

"For now, it is most appropriate to think so. Until this morning, they visited Khan's smithy as normal. However, they were missing after that. It is certain that something happened in the smithy."

Valmont asked after hearing the explanation. "Where is Khan?"

"He has also disappeared."

"This is ridiculous! What on earth happened in that smithy?"

"We are investigating so you will know soon."

It was frustrating because he didn't know the exact circumstances. Valmont and Rabbit were coming up with various assumptions and guesses.

"I've found Khan's location!" An informant entered and reported. "Around two hours ago, there was a witness who saw a strange young man carrying Khan on his back."

"Strange young man... He must be the culprit in this incident. Rabbit, I will leave the business of the smithy to you from now on. Take care of anyone who gets in your way."

"Yes."

According to someone's evaluation of his personality, Valmont had talent as a merchant but he was harsh and violent. How was he able to grow the Mero Company to this extent? This was because he had Rabbit. Rabbit was a resourceful and skilled person who could cover Valmont's deficiencies. He suppressed his emotions and made calm judgments to produce the best results.

Now Rabbit was about to have an encounter with Grid.

CHAPTER 27

“Lululala~”

I naturally hummed a song, and as soon as I got out of the capsule, I sat on the toilet seat.

“Lululululu~”

I then headed to the kitchen and drank cold water.

“Lalalalala~”

I lay back on the couch and watched TV. The humming didn’t stop, and laughter even started to emerge. I was so happy! Thanks to the hidden quest, I obtained a combat buff skill and cleared the quest safely, opening the path to a linked quest. I also gained a lot of levels in a short amount of time.

“I killed a few gangsters and got to level 21, isn’t this a really big jackpot? Why is my luck so good these days?”

Hidden quests weren’t easily obtained. This was the first time in my one year of playing Satisfy. Among the billions of people currently playing Satisfy, only a handful would’ve obtained a hidden quest.

Many things had gone well since I became Pagma’s Descendant. It really was an incredible class.

“There was a reason for my misfortune. It was a divine revelation after years of enduring misfortune. Ahahahahat~!”

What type of quest would Blacksmith Khan give me? And the reward? Maybe the enormous reward would be a unique item that I could use for a while...

If so!

“I can become a billionaire! Kuahahaha!”

The performance of Dainsleif and Valhalla was almost the same as the unique rated 'Failure' that I designed. However, since the usage conditions were very normal, it was possible to have an astronomical value when dealing with users.

'They are items that remind me of why Failure is a failure.'

Albatino was a great blacksmith. He was probably the blacksmith who gave inspiration to Pagma...

"Such a great person wasn't a legendary blacksmith, while I stumbled across the legendary blacksmith class during a quest... Well, this is the world."

I once again felt gratitude towards the legendary class that I obtained.

"Hrmm." I gazed at my watch with a yawn and saw that it had been two hours since I left the capsule. "Eight hours have passed in the world of Satisfy. Won't Khan wake up soon?"

According to the doctor, Khan's health was severe to excessive drinking and stress. But if I followed the quest story, Khan would overcome the alcoholism and his health would be restored. So I didn't have to worry about it.

I connected to Satisfy.

"Log in."

My vision darkened before giving way to a warm light as I opened both eyes.

"...This is the clinic."

The last place I logged out of was the clinic where Khan was hospitalized. I immediately went to find the doctor called Simon.

"What is the old man's status?"

Simon smiled kindly.

"I thought it was dangerous because of the sudden increase in blood pressure in his weakened state. However, his condition is better than expected. He can soon be discharged from the hospital. God has blessed him..."

“I’m glad to hear that.”

“He will be healthier if he stays away from drinking in the future.”

I headed to Khan’s room with Simon. After a while, Khan smiled as he saw me. “Ohh, welcome. I owe a lot to you.”

I responded with a smile, “Those in difficult circumstances should help each other. Now, you can leave the hospital. You just need to pay for the treatment fee.”

“.....”

Why wasn’t Khan answering? I couldn’t help feeling uncomfortable. Then Khan’s words were like a lightning bolt from the clear sky.

“I’m sorry... I currently don’t...”

T-This...! It was like a lightning bolt struck my mind.

“Don’t tell me... you won’t pay the bill?”

“It isn’t that I won’t pay, but I can’t. I don’t have the money.”

“Then what are you going to do? Does this clinic accept credit?”

I stared at Simon. His kind expression that had always been present was gone. Then Simon spoke with a very business-like expression. “Credit isn’t possible.”

“.....”

I wanted to leave this old man alone, but then I wouldn’t be able to get the quest.

“Damm..it! My bad luck was waiting! Luck is truly the worst!”

I had to pay one gold for Khan’s treatment cost. I was afraid to calculate how much I had spent today.

Khan’s smithy.

“Thank you once again.”

As soon as Khan arrived at his smithy, he turned to me and bowed 90 degrees, expressing his sincere gratitude. Fortunately, he had a conscience. He thanked the person who paid one gold for his medical bill.

“Thank you. Thank you very much. I was able to feel hope again because of you. I was able to maintain the business that has been in my family for seven generations, that I almost lost due to my ignorance. I don’t know how to repay you...”

Khan started crying. Unlike young people, elderly people really had a lot of tears.

“Old Man...”

I grabbed Khan’s rough hand.

It was a common action that the ‘main character’ of dramas would do. ‘Isn’t it natural to help a neighbor in trouble? This was nothing, Old Man. There is no need to feel sorry. I don’t need anything in return for my help.’ Such unrealistic words would be spoken.

But I wasn’t a protagonist of a drama! I was a loser of the cruel, relentless modern society that was close to the natural laws of the Serengeti. I want a reward!

“If you really appreciate it, give me something. Come on.”

“Yes, that’s right. Of course, I have to pay you back. Your grace was too big, I don’t know what type of reward to give you.”

I just noticed, was this old man really simple? Didn’t he notice the words I use? I stayed focused. I couldn’t think about anything else.

“Old Man, you were almost robbed of this smithy by those gangsters. If you keep drinking, your health will worsen and you will eventually die.”

“Um, that’s right.”

“When you collapsed from high blood pressure, you could’ve died. Didn’t you live because I took you to the clinic and paid for your treatment fee?”

“Yes.”

“Then aren’t I the savior of your life?”

“Yes.”

I spoke logically. “To the savior of your life, you should give me a precious treasure equivalent to your life!”

Khan stopped crying and looked very sorry.

“A precious treasure equivalent to my life... I don’t have such a thing. What should I do? Ugh...”

“Don’t look so sad. I am very nice so I don’t want treasures that are equivalent to your life. Over there, there.” I pointed to the second floor with my finger. “If you give me Dainsleif and Valhalla, that is enough of a reward.”

My heart was beating excitedly. It was because I was filled with expectation at receiving the items as a gift. But this was me. The world never went my way so easily.

“They are the heirlooms that have been passed down in my family for many generations. It is a treasure that my life can’t be compared to. I will give my life to you, but I can’t give you those items.”

It was a flat refusal. If he wasn’t going to give it, why bother being so earnest? As a frown appeared on my face, Khan coughed with shame and explained.

“These are treasures that my ancestor, Albatino dedicated his soul to. The treasures of his soul can’t be handled by his descendant. I am obliged to keep these heirlooms until the day I die. But there’s an exception.”

Khan was Albatino’s descendant? He couldn’t fake his blood. Did that mean he would display advanced blacksmith skills once his alcohol addiction was healed? And what was the exception?

“What is the exception?”

Khan’s gaze became serious. “There is something I want to ask you. How were you able to use the treasures? And how did you know its value at a glance?”

Khan explained.

“Dainsleif and Valhalla are unlucky battle gear. Their performance transcends imagination, but due to the usage requirements, it has been hundreds of years since an owner showed up. No hero could use them. It’s been like that for the past few centuries. Due to that, they have disappeared in the history records. Now no one knows about their existence.”

Khan and I went upstairs. We stood facing Dainsleif and Valhalla.

Khan touched them and beckoned.

“I am sad since I want the world to know the value of Dainsleif and Valhalla. So I placed it in this prominent place. But in order to fully understand such an extremely good work, the person needs the same level of insight as the creator. Despite having displayed it for decades, no one has understood its value.”

Khan faced me.

“Then you showed up here.”

The long story began.

“There is a legend that is passed down in my family. Around 130 years ago, a man called Pagma came here. He found Dainsleif and Valhalla accumulated dust in a corner of the store. He saw it at first glance. The value of Dainsleif and Valhalla...”

Khan’s eyes flashed.

“Pagma admired the work of Dainsleif and Valhalla. It is said that he showed off his swordsmanship wearing Dainsleif, which has never been used by any hero. The beauty of it was unbelievable, and the swordsmanship seemed to pierce the sky, creating lightning.”

I was amazed. An absurd but exciting fairy tale! Did he read the interest in my eyes?

Khan became more immersed in the story. “My ancestor, who witnessed the swordsmanship, fell to his knees in front of Pagma and begged. ‘Please take Dainsleif and Valhalla. That would be what my ancestor wanted.’”

“Ohh! It became bigger! So? Did Pagma agree?”

“No. If Pagma agreed then Dainsleif and Valhalla wouldn’t be here right now. This was Pagma’s reply. ‘These works are filled with Albatino’s soul. I will refuse because they are so powerful, they shouldn’t be wasted on a small bowl like myself.’ Pagma was obstinate and my ancestor finally had to give up.”

I really didn’t understand the man called Pagma. No, why would he refuse something that was free? I would accept and sell them.

‘Ah, Pagma must’ve been a really rich person. So he wasn’t greedy.’

My story continued while I was thinking this.

“Pagma said this before he left here. ‘There are currently no heroes who can handle this armor. However, when the time comes, many heroes will emerge and all of them will be qualified to become masters of that armor.’”

“.....”

I interpreted Pagma’s words. The many heroes he spoke of referred to the users. The growth of users was fast and infinite. There would soon be rankers who could use Dainsleif and Valhalla.

‘I don’t want the items to be taken by them.’

I asked Khan straight away. “So what is the reason for the lengthy explanation?”

Khan replied without hesitation. “I want to know your identity.”

“Do you think I am one of the heroes that Pagma talked about?”

“That’s right. Didn’t I say there was an exception? If you can prove that you are the hero Pagma talked about, I am willing to give you Dainsleif and Valhalla.”

There were strong expectations in Khan’s eyes.

I couldn’t know. The link with an ancient quest was approaching.

CHAPTER 28

I responded lightly,

“The heroes that Pagma mentioned... I’m probably different from them.”

Disappointment passed over Khan’s face.

This person had an urgent nature. Should I have some fun?

“To be honest, I’m more similar to Pagma than to those heroes.”

“You are like Pagma? What does that... Ah! No way... are you?!”

Khan belatedly realized that while the heroes that Pagma mentioned could use Dainsleif and Valhalla, would they be able to recognize their value? It would be impossible to understand their value unless the person was a blacksmith on the same level as Albatino.

However, I recognized their value. That meant-

“That’s right! You see! I am Pagma’s descendant.” I proudly revealed my identity. “I’m the one who can understand Dainsleif and Valhalla better than anyone else, and I can even use them freely! Give me a chance to obtain them.”

“Ohh...!”

Khan was extremely excited. It was natural for him to be excited. Just like his ancestor who faced Pagma 130 years ago, he now had the opportunity to be the one facing Pagma’s descendant.

“I understand. If you are Pagma’s descendant, I will definitely hand over the heirlooms to you. But is there any way you can prove that you are Pagma’s descendant?”

[The quest 'Pagma's Descendant' has been created.]

[Pagma's Descendant]

Difficulty: Class quest.

You have certainly been given Pagma's blacksmith skills, but do you know exactly who Pagma is? Can you proudly and confidently carry out his will? Who is Pagma? If he were simply a blacksmith with good skills, his legend wouldn't be scattered across the continent.

First, start with the clue of the swordsmanship that pierced the sky and follow Pagma's legend. If you can collect all of the legends, you will truly understand Pagma and be the successor to his will.

At that moment, a new legend will be born.

* There is no time limit for this class quest.

* If you accept the class quest of a legendary class, you can't change your class again.

* The legendary class quest has the power to transform Satisfy's world, according to the result.

Class Quest Clear Conditions: Complete all linked quests successfully.

Class Quest Clear Reward: Unknown.

* First Class Quest: [Pagma's Swordsmanship.]

It was said that the force of Pagma's swordsmanship pierced the sky. This may be a clue to Pagma's swordsmanship, which wasn't described in Pagma's rare book.

* First Class Quest Clear Condition: Learn Pagma's swordsmanship.

First Class Quest Clear Reward: Dainsleif (Reproduction).

[Quest is in progress.]

I should've guessed due to being able to wear all equipment, but Pagma wasn't just a blacksmith.

‘Then what? Is Pagma’s Descendant a class that isn’t limited to just a blacksmith?’

What will I look like after completing all quests? A blacksmith and a warrior? Or, maybe more? I couldn’t anticipate it yet. Perhaps, a new legend would be born.

“Good! I will look for Pagma’s swordsmanship right now.”

I was about to leave the smithy with strong footsteps when I suddenly stopped.

‘Where should I go? In addition, I am currently only level 21. Should I really leave on an adventure without making a plan?’

The ultimate goal of the class quest was to collect all of Pagma’s legends scattered throughout the continent. In other words, didn’t I need a level capable of venturing across the continent? It was impossible.

‘This is a quest where I will need to take my time and proceed slowly. I want to finish the quest right now but... it can’t be helped.’

My excitement became dull. Khan saw my disappointment and handed me a drink.

“It is late at night, so why don’t you have a drink? There are many things I want to talk to you about. I want to talk about Pagma, the blacksmith techniques and the future of this smithy.”

“Excuse me... shouldn’t you stop drinking?”

“...Cough cough.”

I took the bottle from Khan’s hand. Then I found all the other alcohol bottles hidden around the smithy. “I will confiscate all of them.”

A class quest that I wouldn’t know the reward until it was completed! Someday I would finally clear it, but I couldn’t be rewarded if the client was dead. I had an obligation to make sure that Khan stopped drinking.

“Today I am happy, so just one bottle...”

“You can’t.” I said firmly and placed all the bottles in my inventory.

‘Okay. If I sell all of this liquor, I can get two gold.’

As I was pleased with the thought of earning money, the door of the smithy opened. A slim man entered. He looked at me while adjusting his glasses, then turned and greeted Khan politely.

“Are you Khan? It is nice to meet you. I am Rabbit, an employee of the Mero Company.”

Mero Company?

‘The one who hired those gangsters? Doesn’t he look too gentle?’

I watched silently. The nervous Khan warily watched the person called Rabbit. Rabbit opened his mouth with a mild expression.

“You owe 600 gold to the Mero Company. But according to what I heard, you don’t have the ability to pay off your debt.”

“So you want me to hand you the smithy?”

Rabbit smiled. “I want to give you an opportunity because I have a high opinion of your ability.”

“Oppor...tunity?”

“Yes. Khan’s blacksmithing skills are excellent, so I want to buy those skills. How about it? The Mero Company will take ownership of this smithy, but we will transfer the operating rights to you. I promise a high salary.”

The Mero Company was compromising. They would own the smithy, but they would let Khan run it.

“In other words, the Mero Company will be the dog above me?”

“Haha, you speak such rough words.”

“And if I refuse?”

Rabbit’s expression showed that he didn’t understand. “You refuse? Why? Aren’t these conditions good compared to before?”

“I’m not afraid of losing a job! I don’t want to hand over this smithy, which has been in my family for generations.”

“Hrmm... Indeed.”

The glasses-wearing Rabbit talked to himself while touching his chin.

“Then should I use armed force? No, it is a shame to use such a savage method. Can I sue the blacksmith for not paying his debt? No, there are several steps and it will take too long. Khan is stubborn, so what is the best way to persuade him?”

Mutter mutter.

He was an unusual person who revealed his surface thoughts by speaking them aloud. He soon came up with an idea.

“Khan, I would like to see if you qualify to keep this smithy. How about it? Compete with the blacksmith the Mero Company will hire. If you make something better than our blacksmith and win, I will admit that you are qualified to be the owner of the smithy. I will also reimburse your debt. But if you lose the game, you must admit that you aren’t qualified and hand the smithy over to us. How about it?”

The conditions seemed good at first glance, but I thought that Khan should reject it. It was obvious that the opponent would be someone more skilled than Khan. In order for Khan to overcome this crisis, he had to inform the lord that he was unfairly tricked by the Mero Company and seek legal help. But Khan enthusiastically accepted Rabbit’s proposal.

“I understand!”

“Ohh, good choice.”

Khan attached some conditions, “However, I can’t exert my old skills due to drinking and not working for a while. Is it possible for my successor to participate in the game instead of me?”

Rabbit’s expression stiffened. “I heard that you didn’t have a successor?”

“You are misinformed. Over there. He is my successor.”

“Hoh... I see? He looks too incompetent to be your successor. You want him to participate in the game? Are you certain?”

“Do I look like I am someone who will joke around?”

“Well, it is fine with me. Rather, I am grateful.”

What was going on? Why was Khan pointing at me?

[The quest ‘Item Production Game with the Mero Company!’ has been created.]

“...What is this?”

Khan must be crazy! He didn’t ask my permission and just arbitrarily gave me a quest. Wasn’t this too presumptuous?

“No, hey, Khan... huh?”

As I was about to express my resentment towards Khan, the quest window popped up.

[Item Production Game with the Mero Company!]

Difficulty: A

The Mero Company has asked Khan to compete in a blacksmith game. But Khan is in the worst condition. Khan decided that it was too hard for him to participate in the tournament, passing it on to you.

Quest Clear Conditions: Win in the game against the Mero Company.

Quest Clear Reward: +500 reputation in Winston. The affinity with the Winston residents will rise. 600 gold prize.

Quest Failure: Reputation in Winston will fall to a minimum.

Khan’s smithy will belong to the Mero Company.

[Would you like to accept the quest?]

I canceled my curses towards Khan. Look at the quest success rewards! 600 gold! A huge 600 gold! How much was 600 gold in cash? 100 gold was 120,000 won...

“720,000 won!”

720,000 won was a huge amount that could only be earned by doing labor tasks all day without resting, for eight days. What was the failure penalty compared to the tremendous success rewards? There was still some damage, but Khan would be the one receiving most of it. I never thought there would be a day when this honey-like quest would come to me.

“Why would I refuse? I accept the quest!”

[The quest has been accepted.]

Rabbit asked with a surprised expression.

“Hoh? Is your successor not avoiding it? He is surprisingly confident.”

“What is so surprising? Look at my brave face. I clearly look confident right?”

“Huhut, that can either be good or poisonous... Okay. I will pass on the place and date that the game will take place in the near future. Then farewell until that day.”

Then Rabbit left. Khan knelt in front of me.

“I’m sorry. I’m really sorry. Doing this without consulting you... But it couldn’t be helped. I want to keep this smithy!”

I pulled Khan up. Then I embraced him tightly. “Why are you sorry? Don’t be bothered. Is there a need to be sorry considering our relationship? I will help you. So don’t worry.”

“Ahh... thank you... Thank you very much. I wonder if there is another angel like you? Sob sob!”

Khan's tears soaked my clothes. I would like to ask for laundry money, but I didn't need to go that far. It was thanks to Khan that I had the opportunity to earn 720,000 won.

"Kukukuk... kuhahahaha!"

Winston! Blessed land! You are so lovely!

CHAPTER 29

The item production game with the Mero Company! This quest was at A rank difficulty. In other words, it was classified as a high difficulty quest. Common sense stated that it was impossible for a level 21 user to clear an A-grade quest.

Was I going to fail this quest? Why did I accept such a hard quest? It was natural: I accepted the quest because I thought I could clear it.

If this quest were related to combat or adventuring, I wouldn't have much confidence. No, I would've turned down the quest in the first place. I wouldn't be able to clear it at my current level, even if I was a legendary class.

But the item production game with the Mero Company required crafting an item to win. A quest that would succeed if I made an item better than the blacksmith hired by the Mero Company.

"I am the legendary blacksmith who has produced an epic arrow! I can win, even if the Mero Company hires an advanced level blacksmith. Kukuk, this is the quest for me... no, it's an event!"

As moonlight seeped in through the window, I smiled and spoke a splendid monologue, like a character from a manhwa. Khan returned from picking up the item making tools in the warehouse and trembled at the sight of me.

"Did you eat something bad at dinner...? You look sick, are you okay? Do you need medicine? No, I will bring you to the doctor right now!"

"...Where do I look sick?"

Khan didn't seem to have a sense of aesthetics.

'Tsk tsk, a blacksmith is a type of artist.'

The works made by Khan were obviously inferior in appearance and performance. As I felt certain of this, Khan brought out a beautiful sword and helmet.

"These are the pieces I made. What do you think? Isn't it okay? I was famous for

making really beautiful pieces during my prime. My aesthetic sense has always been admired by artists. Haha.”

...This old man, was he reading my thoughts? As I gazed at the sword and helmet, Khan laid out various production tools.

“As you can see, the tools are properly stocked. There are various metals, ores, and logs of wood piled up in the warehouses. There are a lot of materials, but I haven’t done any business in the past months... But the result is good. You can use these materials during your training.”

Khan smiled bitterly, so I couldn’t help asking him a question,

“The Mero Company tried to put you into debt and hired gangsters to interfere in your sales. They also threatened and assaulted you. Why didn’t you ask for help from the lord or guards? Why stay quiet?”

Khan sighed.

“I have filed a complaint with the guard captain several times and appealed to the lord. I wanted the guards to protect me and for the lord to stop this injustice, but they didn’t even look at me. My requests were ignored.”

“...I guess it was the work of the Mero Company.”

“Right. The Mero Company is one of the largest and richest companies in the north. The lord and guards have already received bribes from the Mero Company. It isn’t just me. Many other Winston residents were hurt by the Mero Company and thrown onto the streets, but the lord didn’t lift a single finger to help them.”

In the end, money was the best. Once again, I realized the greatness of money and vowed that I would be rich.

“Eh? By the way, doesn’t Winston belong to Earl Steim?”

“That’s right.”

“Why don’t you and the residents go to Earl Steim and accuse Winston’s lord? Then Earl Steim will punish... no, you don’t think that the hands of the Mero Company have reached Earl Steim?”

Khan shook his head.

“It doesn’t seem like it. We’ve tried many times to meet Earl Steim; however, the lord noticed and prevented us from leaving Winston every time. Even if we raise an appeal, it won’t be passed onto Earl Steim... The lord wouldn’t go so far to stop us if the earl is on his side.”

“There isn’t anyone monitoring this place?”

“The inspectors have been bought by the lord a long time ago.”

Yes, in the end, money was the best. I accepted it and stood up. Then I lit the furnace and comforted Khan.

“Don’t worry. Now you have me. I will give the people of the Mero Company a flat nose. Do you trust me? Can you trust me and leave this part to me?”

“Of course I trust you. Pagma’s Descendant can win no matter what blacksmith is your opponent... Grid, you really are dependable. If my son was alive, he would be a similar age to you... that child would’ve been a good young man like you... sob...”

Khan was an old man with a lot of tears. But that didn’t seem to be the main issue. It meant he was a man with a lot of scars.

‘Poor man.’

...Eh? What? Why was I feeling such sentiment? Strangely, my mind weakened when I saw Khan. Was Pagma’s ideology implanted in me without knowing after I became his descendant?

‘Khan has a great affinity with me, but I don’t know why I’m feeling like this.’

I saw Khan slyly looking for a drink and sat down next to him.

“Old Man, watch my work all night. Then you will soon forget about your drinking. You will be filled with the desire to be a blacksmith again.”

“I-Is that so?”

Ack! What was this? Why did I smile gently when I looked at the old man?

...Ah. As I started into the fire of the furnace, I remembered an old memory I had forgotten. When I was in elementary school, I was able to feel great happiness when I visited my grandfather's house during the holidays. I always felt better due to the warm love I received from my grandfather and grandmother.

I see. Khan's atmosphere and way of talking resembled my grandfather.

"Have a cup of tea. It is tea made of boiled Lunol leaves, and the fragrance is very good."

"Well, it isn't bad. I would rather receive money but..."

"Huh? What did you say? The noise is so loud that I can't hear you!"

"You can't hear me?"

"I can't hear what you are saying!"

"...Indeed, you are skilled."

Kaaang! Kaaang!

The moment of sharing tea and hammering iron with a person I liked. My heart grew heavy. This was the first time I felt a precious moment in Satisfy.

"But you... how come your hammering form is like that? Was I mistaken because my expectations were too great? No? It's not like that? It should look like this. No, you have to narrow your elbows a bit more... You... are you really the descendant of Pagma? T-Tell me honestly. Y-You're not a scam artist, are you? Are you someone from the Mero Company?! I was crazy to accept Rabbit's offer!"

...This old man.

"Be quiet! Can you see my skills so quickly? Ah, just leave me alone a little bit! Why are you taking the hammer?"

"I judged your skills too quickly? This is too strange. Pagma's descendant should've mastered this. A-A fraud! A crook."

Ah, you... annoying.

Ttang! Ttang!

The night deepened. But I didn't rest. I was in my peak condition. I should use this to improve my technical skills. I improved my skills throughout the night, and Khan no longer called me a scammer.

Then the next day, the training began in earnest. Khan saw my work and forgot about drinking, revealing his 60 years experience as a blacksmith. He helped me using the skills and knowledge that he accumulated.

"The thing to consider when making armor isn't durability. The first thing is to design armor that will allow the wearer to move freely."

I examined armor and made it.

"Uhuh! The strength and weaknesses aren't aligned properly! Why is only this part calibrated? You need to focus! You aren't a three-year-old child, so why are you becoming so distracted?"

I was scolded.

"Amazing, amazing. Why is it so different as soon as you start concentrating? Your talent is endless."

Then I was praised after the scolding.

"There are some stupid seeds who stop when they think it is good enough. Their logic is that they are pushed for time, so they might as well take forging out of the question. But they are mistaken. Forging is not a minor task. If forging is omitted, the meaning of quenching and tempering will fade. If you're lacking in time, then you should omit quenching instead of forging."

There were deep teachings.

"I agree with you. In the first place, does it make sense to skip processes just because of lacking time? Then an imperfect item will be made. No matter how much time it takes, I will try to make perfect things.

"Ohh! A respectable craftsman. As expected of Pagma's descendant, having such noble ideas at a young age."

“It isn’t a big deal. I just want to make perfect stuff to sell at a more expensive...”

“Hahaha! Modesty is also a great virtue in a young man. You are respectable! Grid! It is the luck of a lifetime that I met you!”

“.....”

He misunderstood my comments. Either way, it was a happy time.



“Um....”

I woke up before the alarm clock rang. I looked through the curtain and saw that outside was still dark. I checked the time.

“It is only 4 a.m.”

It was too early. I could afford to close my eyes for at least 30 more minutes. My usual self would grumble about waking up early before going back to bed. But today was different.

“It is a refreshing morning.”

I felt good. The day before, I spent two nights of Satisfy time and polished my blacksmithing skills. I created three pieces of armor and two swords, with two of the items having a rare rating.

Thanks to that, all my stats rose by +4, the experience of my Legendary Blacksmith’s Craftsmanship skill was close to 20% and the experience of the Legendary Blacksmith’s Breath skill rose by nearly 8%.

My concentration and sophistication improved, greatly increasing the speed of production. Khan really helped a lot. He was different from Smith in Bairan Village.

“Khan still hasn’t returned to his peak condition, but the difference between a low-level blacksmith and advanced level blacksmith is like the difference between the sky and the earth.”

I wanted to see Khan. I would be taught by him while making items. Growth was

another attraction of leveling up.

“Heok.”

I wanted to see him as soon as I woke up in the morning?

“Am I overdoing it?” *Sniff.* “Let’s go shower.”

I headed straight to the bathroom. After a refreshing wash in hot water, I exited to see my mother preparing breakfast.

“Good morning.”

“Youngwoo, you rested yesterday. Has your fatigue improved? Why are you awake so early?”

“This is the power of beef rib soup! It is the effect of eating something good. My physical condition ~ great. So I should eat some grilled eel...”

“Why does a person with no girlfriend need to eat eel?”

The words were spoken by my father, who was reading his newspaper in the room. I puffed up.

“Are you ignoring me because I don’t have a girlfriend? There are many places where it will have an effect... no, who says I don’t have a girlfriend?”

“What? Hohohohohoho~!”

My mother grabbed her belly and started to laugh. She laughed so much that tears appeared.

CHAPTER 30

‘What?’

I felt like I was being ignored as I saw my mother’s reaction. I felt bad and questioned my mother,

“Mother, why are you laughing? Why are you laughing when I said that I could have a girlfriend?”

My mother couldn’t stop laughing,

“Hohohoho~! It’s funny when a kid who’s lived for 26 years and never got a girlfriend speaks so proudly. You are my child, but you are really amazing! My belly hurts. Hohohohohoho~!”

“.....”

This was obviously ignorance. Was there another son in the world who would be so ignorantly ignored by his mother? As I wobbled away in shock, my father backed my mother up instead of scolding her.

“Son, please make sure to have a girlfriend by next year. Shouldn’t you be prepared? No, think about other things first. Shouldn’t you pay off your debt first? What type of woman would want to date you when you are like this? No matter how confident you are, it isn’t easy. Do you think a meager man like you can instill confidence in your lover? Just give up on having a girlfriend for a while.”

“.....”

This was also obviously ignorance. This was a morning where I felt better than ever! My heart, which was in the best condition, crumbled at my parents’ words.

“Both of you are too much! There is a reason why I haven’t had a girlfriend yet! My debt isn’t a problem. You two are the ones who made me like this!”

I poured out the words that I had buried in my heart.

“I don’t have a lover because of Mother and Father! If you two had made me like a movie star, I would be able to get a girlfriend. Dammit. The two of you made me ugly, so the girls don’t care about me.”

“Gosh, are you blaming us for being born this way? Look at your sister. She came out from the same belly as you, but she is so beautiful. Did you know that you were also born beautiful like Sehee?”

“People aren’t all about appearance...it is also about personality. Tsk tsk, the more I look, the more pathetic you are.”

“Eek...”

I was being humiliated like this in the morning! Serious doubts revolved around my head.

‘Was I adopted as a child?’

Maybe my parents aren’t actually my parents.

‘My parents said I was a beautiful baby, but are they really my parents...? Am I just a kid they picked up?’

The two people who raised me for 26 years weren’t actually my parents! Then what about my real parents? Where were my parents?

...No, what was I doing now? It was almost time to go work. I couldn’t afford to play around like this. I calmed down. Then I sat down at the table and turned to my father, changing the topic.

“Father, how is Grandfather these days? Is he healthy as always?”

“Huh? Why are you suddenly asking about your grandfather?”

“There is an old NPC blacksmith in the game, and he reminded me of Grandfather. So I suddenly remembered Grandfather.”

...Would he become angry again after hearing about the game? No, maybe he would beat me up...

“You just suddenly thought about him.” My father said in a flat voice. “Then you should come along with I go to visit your grandfather next month. Do you know how sorry you should be for not visiting your grandfather for one year?”

My family had been visiting my grandparents’ house every holiday since seven years ago. Seven years ago, my grandmother died and it was an attempt to soothe my grandfather’s loneliness. Mother and Father tried to persuade my grandfather to stay with us, but he firmly rejected. Perhaps he thought he would be a burden.

I had been loved by my grandfather since I was young, so I visited him every year until last year. I never once visited after starting Satisfy. I wanted to play the game instead of taking time off to travel to my grandfather’s house.

‘I was an unfilial bastard.’

Was my grandfather currently lonely, just like Khan? I was worried because I was able to get a glimpse through Khan about how lonely old men could act. In the future, I should try and visit my grandfather as frequently as possible.

“I ate well.”

After a while, I finished breakfast and immediately headed towards my workplace. The people who already arrived filled the office with tobacco smoke. The cigarette smoke was causing me to get a headache.

‘Why do they like smoking, when cigarettes are a waste of effort and money. If I had the money spent on buying cigarettes...’

Let’s endure it a little longer. Once the item manufacturing was in full swing, I would no longer have to go back here. I could make a large amount of money by making and selling items. From then on, Satisfy will become my job. I could lie in my capsule all day and not have to listen to my parents’ nagging. But for that to happen, I needed to win against the Mero Company.

‘I can use Khan’s smithy as a base. I must win the game and protect Khan’s smithy.’



The Mero Company's Winston branch.

Valmont wasn't feeling good. It was because he felt disappointed with his most trusted subordinate, Rabbit.

"Why did you do such an annoying thing?"

A production game over the smithy? Valmont couldn't understand Rabbit's intentions.

"If Khan can't pay me back, it is natural to use the smithy as collateral. And Khan doesn't have the ability to pay off the debt. In other words, the smithy is sure to enter my hand. It is only a matter of time, whether it is slow or fast. I wanted to speed that up, which is why I let you handle the matter. But have you forgotten your mission?"

Bam!

Valmont threw the apple he was chewing against the wall. The pieces of apple splattered against Rabbit's face. Rabbit quietly took out his handkerchief and wiped his dirty face.

Valmont huffed as he saw Rabbit's dignified manner and shouted. "Why are you giving Khan hope by making a useless bet? Why? You opened up the opportunity that he might be able to keep the smithy. Have you been bribed by Khan?"

Rabbit was a person he had trusted more than anyone before today. It was a simple example that revealed Valmont's character, who didn't trust people well.

Rabbit explained calmly.

"Right now, our main base is in Winston. But unfortunately, the Winston residents have recognized the Mero Company as their enemy. Considering the long-term perspective of the Mero Company's business development, it is best to be friendly with the Winston residents. They have to care about the Mero Company in order to help develop it. But the Mero Company has taken their property. It won't be easy to appease them."

"The company... took their property? Bah! Sophistry! The value of their land was shit. I paid for and bought them legally. They also welcomed it. Now they regret it as the

land develops and the prices rise? Truly treacherous guys!"

"They wouldn't be so alarmed right now if you used some of the profits from the land to benefit them. Then they would've appreciated it and contributed to the development of the Mero Company in the long term."

"In other words, I am the bad one? Bah! The residents of Winston are still criticizing all the work I have done."

"Don't look at the backs of people. You will succeed by following the money.' My master had that type of strategy. But my opinion is a little different. It is important to catch the hearts of the people. Then the money will come naturally. People grateful to the Mero Company will develop into loyal customers."

"You...!" Valmont looked at Rabbit in a menacing manner. "Don't try to teach me! Do I look like a child to you? You just have to do what I tell you to. And what is with this bullshit? Get to the point! Why did you make such a lousy bet with Khan?"

'This is the limit of Valmont. It will be difficult to grow the Mero Company any further.'

The reason why the Mero Company could grow this big was because Valmont, when he was still young, had listened to Rabbit's advice and operated the business. But now Valmont was filled with arrogance and egotism, and he didn't listen to Rabbit's advice anymore.

'Once this business finishes, I need to leave.'

Rabbit made his decision and decided to explain his intentions to Valmont.

"Khan's position in Winston is very high. There are many people who consider him the hero who resists the Mero Company. In these circumstances, if the Mero Company takes Khan's smithy in a nasty manner, the anger of the residents will go out of control and will likely lead to a rebellion. The residents will work as a group to hinder the Mero Company, ultimately dealing harm to it."

Valmont started to listen.

Rabbit continued the explanation.

"I am confident that I can reform the company's image through this game. 'Why did

they give a chance to Khan, when they can just take his smithy?' The residents will start feeling this suspicion. Then I will advertise that 'we recognized Khan's skill and want to give him a chance.' This suggests that the Mero Company can be a friend rather than an enemy. Then the population's perception of the company will change drastically. They will think that the Mero Company doesn't only move for money, that is also cares for people."

"...So we will gain loyal customers?"

"Yes."

"Hrmm."

Valmont still wasn't convinced. But he didn't feel the need to stop something that had already been started. In the end, Valmont decided to support Rabbit.

"If you hire an excellent blacksmith then we can win right?"

"Of course."

"In addition, the opponent isn't Khan?"

"According to my research, he is a young man whose reputation is so poor that it is doubtful he is even a blacksmith."

"Okay. Hire the best blacksmith. Don't worry about the money."

Valmont was insufficient in many ways, but a positive was that he was quick to make decisions. If he had no positive aspects, how could he become the master of a giant company in the first place?

Rabbit smiled with satisfaction. "I have already found a person."

No matter how bad Khan's condition was, he wasn't stupid enough to entrust it to an unskilled person. So Rabbit wanted to watch out for the young man called Grid. But when Rabbit met Grid, he saw that Grid had no experience. It was a person he couldn't feel alert against.

Rabbit was convinced that if he chose a suitable blacksmith, they wouldn't lose the game.

‘I can’t be careless.’

But Rabbit had a cautious nature. He tried to get the best results every time. So he would be vigilant this time. He was going to hire the best blacksmith.

CHAPTER 31

“Khan, I heard the rumour. But...you aren’t drinking?”

Kaaang! Kaaang!

It happened when I was working hard raising my blacksmith skills in the smithy. Khan’s friend arrived and started talking.

“Not drinking? What are you saying?”

“No, if you’re sober, then why are you hanging out with this unimpressive newbie every day? Tsk tsk. At first glance, he looks like someone who is ignorant of the world.”

I was referred to as an ‘unimpressive newbie’ by this damn bastard. This damn bastard had been talking ever since he entered the smithy.

“Old Man, if you stopped drinking because of this person...”

I placed strength in the hand holding my hammer. A rapidly rising killing instinct! Khan noticed that the hammer in my hand was shaking and hurriedly told his friend.

“Hey, shut up. You’re mistaken.”

“Mistaken?”

“Yes, mistaken. That young man might have a garbage-like appearance, but you shouldn’t judge a person from their outer appearance. That young man is actually a big person.”

Garbage-like appearance? Did Khan always think like that about me? I felt betrayed.

Kwang! Kwang!

I seethed with anger and hammered the steel with more strength. Then I suddenly looked at myself. I had levelled up from the gangsters, but I was still only level 21. Since both my armor and weapon were left in the warehouse, I was just wearing beginner clothes.

The criteria that an NPC used to judge users was their level, equipment and reputation. I didn't have any equipment, my level was low and my reputation was low, so I naturally looked like crap to the NPCs.

'What about the reputation I gained when I killed the gangsters?'

As I had some doubts, I listened to Khan and his friend's conversation.

"You don't believe it? Don't be deceived by his appearance and watch his techniques closely. That isn't the normal skill for a blacksmith. Isn't it? And this is a secret, but this young man took care of Veil's gang alone."

"Uhuh! What nonsense are you talking? Yes, I admit that his blacksmithing technique is great now that I've seen it with my own eyes. That young man seems moderately good, unlike his appearance. But taking care of Veil's gang alone? Aren't they the fiercest outlaws in Winston? It's impossible! How could a blacksmith take them out alone?"

"I saw it directly. Have you seen any of Veil's gang on the street today? Aren't they missing? It was all done by this young man."

"Huhu... this friend should really drink less. If this is true, shouldn't his reputation have already spread?"

Khan clicked his tongue. "Think about it. If rumors spread that this young man defeated Veil, the Mero Company wouldn't leave him alone. So why bother spreading it? There are no rumors because I was the only witness. Therefore, his reputation is still unknown."

"Well, you were the one who witnessed it. Is that young man so great? Huhut, now that I'm looking closely, doesn't he seem rather dignified?"

I see. There were no rumors that I defeated Veil's group, so the effect of my reputation hadn't spread yet.

"Khan! Are you here?"

At that moment, a group of people entered the smithy. They were holding flyers in their hands. A middle aged person showed Khan the flyer and asked, "Is this true?"

Khan verified the contents of the flyer and nodded. “That’s right.”

The people were agitated. What was this about? I was intrigued, so I moved closer and examined the details of the flyer.

‘Ohu.’

(The Mero Company will compete with Blacksmith Khan in an item production game. The reason that we chose to do this is because we respect Khan as a human and admire his blacksmith skills. If the Mero Company loses to Khan in this game, our company will help Khan keep his smithy by paying off his debt. On the other hand, the smithy will get transferred to us if we win, but we will leave the operating rights to Khan. A coexistence with the residents of Winston is our ultimate goal. The date of the game will be announced in the near future, so please pay attention to it.)

These words were printed on the flyers that the people were carrying. I could feel that the day of the competition was steadily approaching.

‘Heh. I’m not even the slightest bit nervous. No matter how skilled the blacksmith hired by the Mero Company is, I am Pagma’s Descendant!’

As Pagma’s Descendant, I had the ‘Legendary Blacksmith’s Craftsmanship Skill.’ Even if the Mero Company hired a blacksmith, it was highly probable that I would produce a higher rated item.

Was the blacksmith skill so common? Even the most renowned NPC blacksmith was likely to just be at the advanced level. The opponent I would face was likely to be an advanced level blacksmith. As Pagma’s Descendant, I could easily defeat an advanced level blacksmith.

The people were agitated.

“It is easy for the Mero Company to take Khan’s smithy. But they didn’t just forcibly take the smithy, and instead asked for a fair game. They are giving Khan a job. According to their claim, they genuinely respect Khan.”

“That’s right. Even if they win the game, they will allow Khan to operate the smithy? Then is the rumor that the Mero Company plans to create jobs for the residents true?”

“This seems to be the case. Maybe the Mero Company isn’t as bad as we thought. They

really are trying to coexist with us.”

It sounded really plausible when listening to the people talking.

‘The Mero Company... They hired gangsters to threaten Khan, so I thought they were bad guys. But they are actually decent. Then why were the gangsters so arrogant? Was there an error in the command system?’

My vague hostility towards the Mero Company disappeared.

‘The Mero Company gave me a quest that will allow me to receive 600 gold. There is no need to think badly of them. Yes.’

Most of the people present, as well as myself, developed a slight liking towards the Mero Company. However, Khan was different.

“That’s it. This is why the Mero Company asked for the game! That Rabbit, he isn’t an ordinary man!”

The indignant Khan grabbed the flyer. *Chwaak!* He ripped it. Then he reproached the people.

“You forgot about all your humiliation and suffering just from seeing this piece of paper! The Mero Company is a villain who knew about Winston’s development beforehand and used the information to monopolize our land. You were deprived of everything, becoming poor and hungry. What has the Mero Company done for us since then?”

Many people sympathized with Khan.

“That’s right. The Mero Company is the enemy! Are we going to commit another mistake by being deceived by their tricks? Don’t be nice to them! We will be stabbed in the back then fall to hell.”

The affinity between the Winston residents and the Mero Company was bad. Their grudge against the company was quite deep.

“Excuse me.” In the midst of the rage, someone held up his hand. Everyone’s eyes concentrated on the man.

‘A user.’

NPCs had a green name above their heads. But the name of this man was white. It meant he was a normal user who hadn’t done any bad deeds.

Khan asked him. “Young man, you aren’t a resident of this village.”

“My name is Huroi. I am an ordinary visitor who came to Winston for the first time.”

“I see. Huroi, what question do you have?”

“Yes. You might feel uncomfortable but...can you let me speak?”

“Speak.”

The NPCs were acting favourable towards a person they met for the first time? Unlike me, Huroi seemed to be a high level traveller, or a traveller with a high reputation on the continent.

“According to the rumors I heard when I came here to Winston...the Mero Company, who knew about Winston’s development plan, approached you and bought land and commercial areas from those who didn’t know about the development plan. Right after that, Winston made great strides in its development and the Mero Company received great benefits. Is this correct?”

“That’s right.”

“Were you forced to sell the land to the Mero Company?”

“No.”

“Then are the Mero Company’s actions towards you truly unscrupulous? Weren’t you blinded by money when you sold your land and stores to the Mero Company? Weren’t you trying to move your homes with the money you earned? But you didn’t want to leave after belatedly realized that Winston was going to be developed and the situation turned out like this. Ultimately, the ones you should blame aren’t the Mero Company. It is your own ignorance and self-interest.”

“What are you saying?”

“You are clearly the Mero Company’s crony!”

The atmosphere abruptly changed, but Huroi didn’t back down.

“A company is formed to build wealth! The act of taking advantage of information to form a monopoly is natural for them. Many of you hate them, but there is no need to be enemies. Did they actually do anything wrong?”

“This bastard is talking until the end!”

“Should we shut his mouth?”

The residents didn’t like the Mero Company being defended. There were some people so enraged that they wanted to beat Huroi up. But Huroi wasn’t afraid.

“I’m not hired by the Mero Company! The reason I’m saying these words is for you. Everyone! Don’t try to fight with the Mero Company, but coexist with them. That is the much wiser choice.”

The angry people listening to Huroi’s words calmed down. It was evidence that Huroi was persuading them.

Then Khan spoke. “This young man is meddling in other people’s business. What is your intention behind giving such advice?”

Khan didn’t hide his suspicions. He was convinced that Huroi was sent by the Mero Company.

‘Isn’t it obvious? He must have a compelling reason to speak up like this.’

I was certain that Huroi had received a quest from the Mero Company. If people were persuaded, his quest would be successful. ‘Most people have already been persuaded. I absolutely can’t allow this to happen. I should interfere!’

It was irrelevant to me if the Mero Company was an enemy or not. So why was I bothered? The reason...

‘The misfortune of others is my happiness! I don’t want to see him clear his quest in front of me. I will make him fail!’

Yes, it was a simple reason. I wanted to make Huroi fail the quest.

CHAPTER 32

“Hey, you...”

The moment I was about to come out to disrupt Huroi, Khan restrained me.

“Leave it to me.”

Khan sent me a thankful look before approaching Huroi. Then he nodded.

“Your words are right. It would be good for our future to coexist with a large company.”

What was he saying?

Buzz buzz.

The people were disturbed once Khan, who was more resentful of the Mero Company than anyone else, supported Huroi’s claim. Naturally, all eyes and ears focused on Khan. Then Khan spoke, “If Winston didn’t belong to Earl Steim, we would’ve chosen to coexist with the Mero Company as you advised.”

The words were meaningful. Huroi was puzzled.

“If it didn’t belong to Earl Steim...?”

“Yes. The important thing is that this village belongs to Earl Steim. I don’t know where you come from, but there is a local statute called the ‘Rights of the People.’ It is a law that Earl Steim himself imposed because he treasures the people. This is one of the provisions of this statute. ‘The residents of Earl Steim’s territory have the right to be informed more quickly than anyone else about their area of residence.’”

Khan explained the meaning of this provision.

“How you heard about how it is the pioneering age of the north? The north has a bad climate and many monsters. At this moment, numerous pioneers are struggling. What happens when a new land is pioneered?”

“... By default, it will have a large impact on the nearby cities and villages.”

Khan nodded with satisfaction at Huroi's words.

"Yes, that's right. Then what is responsible for Winston's current development? The roads were improved and transportation supplemented. Why were the roads improved and the transportation supplemented? It is because a new land was pioneered not far from here. Winston will be the bridge between this new land and the capital. Do you understand? The north is changing every moment. The people of the north might be damaged by the sudden changes."

Khan cut to the chase.

"This is the reason for the stipulation that Earl Steim's residents have the right to be informed about their area of residence sooner than anyone else. It is so that people can be prepared for the sudden changes. We can minimize the damage or maximize the profits."

Huroi figured out the point of this explanation. "Winston's residents were supposed to benefit from the development, not the Mero Company. You suffered a loss and this is contrary to Earl Steim's will. You have the duty to fight against the Mero Company's tyranny, as well as the Winston lord who gave them the information instead of the Winston residents... Is my interpretation correct?"

"That's right. We must not compromise with the Mero Company. It isn't for our benefit alone. As his people, we also don't want to betray Earl Steim's will. We must accuse Winston's lord and the Mero Company, who are going against Earl Steim's will."

Indeed, a perfect justification. The people cried out with excitement at Khan's words. They cheered. Everyone was united in their determination to confront the Mero Company.

Huroi exclaimed in a loud voice.

"The evil deeds of Winston's lord and the Mero Company must be reported to Earl Steim! But you are under the lord's supervision and can't raise an appeal with Earl Steim. Leave it to me! I will do my duty and inform Earl Steim of the happenings in Winston! For Winston! For you! For the honor of Earl Steim, I will accuse Winston's lord!"

"Thank you. I will believe in you and wait."

Eh? It was clear. Huroi had just received a quest from Khan. But wasn't it strange? Usually, a NPC gave a user a quest. The user would passively receive the quest. However, this didn't give the impressive of a passive quest. Rather, it felt like Huroi induced Khan to give him the quest.

'No way.'

I hurried after Huroi, who had left the smithy. "Hey!"

Huroi looked at me with an extremely cynical expression. It was inconsistent with his enthusiastic appearance in the smithy, so I thought I had the wrong person for a moment.

"Weren't you a folding screen in the corner? What do you want with me? I am busy."

Folding screen in the corner?

'Ah, that's right. I look like a complete beginner right now.'

Unless the person had a very good nature, it was common for ordinary users to be reluctant to deal with beginners. Beginners didn't know anything so they were always asking questions, sometimes even begging.

I immediately cut to the chase so that Huroi wouldn't ignore me and leave.

"Didn't you come to this place because you received a quest from the Mero Company? Your original plan was to convince the Winston residents to work with the Mero Company. But what is this development?"

"Hoh?" Huroi showed an interested response. "You inferred that I have a quest from my actions? You, are you not a beginner? Well, I just aimed for the larger benefit. Share the quest information."

[The player 'Huroi' wants to share the quest information. Would you like to accept?]

I accepted and Huroi's quest information appeared.

[For the Residents of Winston]

Difficulty: A

Winston's residents have been greatly damaged by the selfish lord and the Mero Company.

Originally, you were commissioned by the Mero Company. However, you couldn't turn away from the poor residents, so you betrayed the Mero Company.

Now you must avoid the pursuit of the Mero Company and head for 'Frontier,' the capital of Earl Steim's territory. Be sure to arrive at Frontier and tell Earl Steim of everything that is happening in Winston!

Quest Clear Conditions: An audience with Earl Steim.

Quest Reward: The title 'Apostle of Justice.' The affinity with the Winston residents will rise to the peak. Reputation in Winston will rise to the peak. Earl Steim's gift.

*Apostle of Justice: The 'Courage' stat will be opened. All stats +10. The skill 'Unbreakable Justice' will be generated.

Quest Failure: Level -1. Affinity with the Winston residents will decline. You can't enter Winston until the Winston lord is changed.

"W-What is this enormous compensation?"

Having the greatest reputation and affinity in a village meant that the user could buy goods cheaply and receive hidden quests. In addition, a gift from a senior nobleman would be at least an epic rated item.

Furthermore, the new stat and skill that were generated from the title were so rare that their value couldn't be converted into money. It was definitely a hidden quest. It was even better than the hidden quest I received!

'M-My stomach hurts...'

My jealousy caused dizziness, and it felt like my insides were burning. I was frustrated, while Huroi smiled at me complacently.

“Isn’t it amazing? This is a hidden quest. I’m happy, since this is the first time I’ve seen one.”

H-How annoying. But I didn’t show it because of my pride.

“Hmph? This is amazing? Hidden quests are no big deal! Shit! It isn’t amazing. I don’t feel envious of any of those rewards. I’m not envious!”

“...Ah, is that so?”

“Yes. I’m not envious! So stop boasting about it and tell me what you did. If I’m not mistaken, you induced the NPC to give you the quest. Right?”

Huroi shrugged.

“You noticed quickly. Well, a lot of people know about it, so the information will spread soon. There is no value in keeping it secret and I received a hidden quest, so I will tell you.”

Then I was told something shocking.

“The degree of freedom in Satisfy is infinite. I received the quest by taking advantage of that freedom. I don’t wait until NPCs give me quests. I try to speak words that will make the NPC give me the quest. Here is a simple example. If I say ‘I am quick and diligent when it comes to deliveries’ in front of a restaurant owner, it is highly likely that the restaurant owner will give me a delivery related quest.”

“A-Amazing... I didn’t know that until now... Has anyone else received a quest like this? If so, those who don’t know how to play the game have received damages?”

“Don’t be discouraged. Unless you are an early player who has been playing Satisfy for a year, most users wouldn’t have enough understanding of quests to apply this concept. Except for the early users, most people will be passive towards quests like you. You haven’t receive any large damages. Only a small number of early users have benefited from it. Well, this information has already started to appear on various sites, so soon everyone will know about it.”

“...”

“Hey, why are you pale all of a sudden? Why are you sweating?”

“...I am one.”

“...?”

“I... I have been playing Satisfy for one year since it opened...”

“What? Pff! Puhahaha!” Huroi grabbed his belly. He laughed until tears fell, then raised his thumb as he barely managed to stop. “That is one of the funniest jokes I have ever heard. Isn’t this a good gag? Ah, are you perhaps a comedian in real life? Do you want to be friends? Friends?”

“...Get lost.”

It wasn’t a joke. I really was an early user who had been playing Satisfy for one year. I even took a leave of absence from school to play Satisfy. But I had no idea about such a tip. Did I ever obtain my own know-how while playing Satisfy for a year?

No. I relied on the mundane information that anyone could get from websites. My understanding of Satisfy was so low, I couldn’t believe I was an early user.

‘I am pathetic... I am very ashamed of myself.’

Tears flowed down from my eyes.

“Damn! Damnnnn!! Daaaaammm~nnnnnn! Logout.”

“H-Hey! What, why are you acting like this?”

Huroi was baffled after I left so suddenly.



“What is with that person?”

Huroi was stunned when the person called Grid suddenly logged out. He was an Asian user and had a good sense of humor, so it would have been nice if they could be friends.

“Pfft.”

He chuckled when he thought about it again. Grid declared himself an early user while

not even knowing about how to induce a quest.

“Why did he feel the need to impersonate an early user? He truly has an unusual personality. Then, shall I go?”

Huroi thought it was just a passing relationship. After meeting Grid, Huroi didn’t feel anything special. It was just a funny story that he dismissed lightly.

But the two men were already approaching the whirlwind of destiny.

CHAPTER 33

‘Let’s do the quest.’

It was the very first time Huroi had received a hidden quest since he first started Satisfy almost a year ago. He had been playing Satisfy since the day it opened, but he never had such great luck.

‘The skill called Unbreakable Justice isn’t known so its effectiveness can’t be determined. However, I’ve heard about the courage state in rumors. Every time the courage stat increases by 10 points, attack power and defense will permanently increase.’

Huroi trembled.

‘If I succeed in this quest and receive the Apostle of Justice title, I can grow using the courage stat. Then I can become a ranker.’

Huroi was currently level 127. Compared to the average level of users, it was very high and he was treated as a high-level user wherever he went. But it wasn’t so high considering that he was an early user.

He was only level 127 despite playing 18 out of 24 hours a day for one year because of his class. Huroi’s class wasn’t a combat or production class, it was an ‘orator.’

An orator’s weapon was talking!

Combat classes and production classes could raise their levels relatively easy by hunting or making items. However, an orator only competed with words so it had a weak combat ability and couldn’t make any items.

The reason Huroi managed to reach this level was due to always receiving quests from NPCs through talking. But that method had now reached its limit. The higher the level, the higher the difficulty of the quest and the less experience that was gained. While other people were hunting monsters or selling items, he was going back and forth carrying out unprofitable quests.

Thus, Huroi desperately needed to gain experience through hunting.

However, the weapons that an orator could use were extremely limited. Their health was the lowest of all classes, while their basic combat stats and skills were poor. It was a cycle he couldn't escape from. It was hard for him to even catch a monster 15 levels lower than him.

One of his flagship skills, 'Spiteful Tongue', WAS a powerful skill that causes all stats of the target to decline. But it wasn't easy to use in a life and death fight, as obviously, there were limits to its use.

'The fatal weakness of my class is that my combat strength is weak... I can overcome this weakness with the courage stat.'

He had to succeed in this quest in order to earn the Apostle of Justice title and gain the courage stat. After reaffirming his determination, he arrived at the street in front of the western gate.

The gate was relatively quiet. It was because the lord of Winston strictly monitored and managed the residents, so the residents couldn't leave Winston. Even now, there were no residents of Winston going through the gate, only travelers.

"Thank you for your hard work."

Huroi approached the soldiers guarding the gate and greeted them before presenting his ID card. As a simple traveler who wasn't a resident of Winston, he could easily pass through the gate.

But strangely, the soldiers didn't let Huroi out. Huroi noticed the danger as the soldiers blocked the gates.

'Is the Mero Company already aware of my betrayal?'

It was serious. If he delayed, he would be caught by the Mero Company and fail the quest. This was the biggest opportunity he received in one year, so he couldn't miss it.

"What reason do you have for stopping me? Surely there wasn't a mistake?"

"....."

Huroi tried to talk with the soldiers. He intended to persuade or deceive the soldiers by using his weapon, his eloquence. But the soldiers kept their mouths shut and didn't

speak a single word to Huroi. They blatantly avoided conversing with him.

‘This is ominous.’

Huroi decided that he should leave this place at once. At that moment, he heard a familiar voice behind him.

“No matter what you say, the soldiers won’t respond. I told the soldiers not to react no matter what you say until they receive a signal from me.”

Huroi was so surprised it felt like his heart stopped. It was due to the sudden appearance of Rabbit, a top employee of the Mero Company and commissioned Huroi to persuade the Winston inhabitants.

Huroi tried to conceal his confusion and greeted Rabbit. “Aren’t you Mr. Rabbit? Shouldn’t you be busy doing business in your office?”

“I had a headache so I went out for some fresh air.”

“Haha, relaxation is important. You can’t work efficiently if you are in a bad condition. Rabbit, why did you instruct the soldiers not to talk to me? Are you trying to take away the joy I get from talking to other people? I feel really sad.”

Rabbit grinned at Huroi and said.

“Mr. Huroi, you have an obligation to instigate the residents of Winston, according to your contract with me. It is natural to visit me after fulfilling the contract. But you didn’t do anything and are trying to leave Winston, so I don’t know how to take this.”

Huroi calmly explained, “In order for my words to serve as a weapon, there must be a small gap in the minds of the opponent. I have to wait for the right time to incite the people. This isn’t a problem that can be solved by hurrying, as I have to wait until the right time comes. The scenery near Winston is famous, so I wanted to see it while waiting. I am leaving Winston? It is just a misunderstanding.”

Rabbit made a surprised expression and said,

“Is that so? I misunderstood your intentions?”

As an orator, Huroi had a passive skill called ‘Persuasion’ and the ‘persuasive power’

stat. Both his Persuasion level and persuasive power stat were currently very high, so he could move NPCs according to his will if he used it well.

“Yes, it is a misunderstanding. So Rabbit, can you direct the soldiers to let me pass through the gate?”

Huroi was sure that he succeeded after seeing Rabbit’s response. However, he was mistaken. Rabbit was an NPC with very high intelligence. He had a lot of experience from growing the Mero Company to be one of the best in the north. It meant that Huroi wasn’t at a level to manipulate him yet.

Rabbit made a sorry expression. “I thought that Mr. Huroi’s eloquence was very good. So I believed that you could easily incite the residents. But now you look incompetent. I admit that I misunderstood your abilities.”

“... Huh?”

“This morning, the Mero Company distributed flyers across the village as scheduled. There will be a big gap in the minds of the residents who read the flyers. They will be wavering and confused. Now is the right time for you to enter and dazzle them with your words, making their hearts lean towards the Mero Company. But you lack the ability to read this mood. Otherwise... you must’ve betrayed me.”

“Kuk!”

Rabbit’s eyes were like a hawk’s. The sharp gaze penetrated Huroi and provided enormous pressure.

Huroi realized it. “Rabbit, did you predict my betrayal in advance? You expected me to try to escape by misleading the soldiers, so you gave the soldiers instructions not to talk to me!”

Rabbit shook his head.

“I have met and managed many people. So I never believed in anyone from the beginning. Rather than anticipating your betrayal, I just made assumptions that you might betray me and prepared for the worst. Now, come over here. You will be locked up for a while. Instead of persuading the residents, you have joined them. Therefore, I can’t let you go and meet Earl Steim.”

Rabbit gestured and the soldiers ran towards Huroi.

‘This is the end. I can’t escape from this place with my battle skills. I will clearly be trapped and fail the quest. No... I can’t give up!’

He might never have another chance at a hidden quest. It was an opportunity that must never be missed.

‘Forget about acting rashly. Let’s log out and get rid of the immediate crisis. I need to think carefully about how to handle this crisis.’

Huroi made a swift judgment and tried to log out. In the case of a quest in a specific place, it was impossible to log out during the quest. However, this was the center of a village. There were users curiously watching the situation.

This was a public place so Huroi believed he could log out.

“Logout!”

[You can’t shut down the game here.]

“What...?”

Huroi was astonished. It was due to an unexpected notification window.

“Stop your futile resistance!”

“Ugh!”

After failing to log out, Huroi was captured and tied up by the soldiers.

Rabbit said cynically, “Logout. It is a mysterious spell that takes your immortal bodies to an unknown place Don’t you know that we have the power to neutralize it?”

NPCs were clearly aware of the difference between users and themselves. So Rabbit intended to keep Huroi alive. Huroi would resurrect somewhere else if he was killed, so it was better to imprison him.

Rabbit directed the soldiers.

“Lock him in the castle’s dungeon. Tell the lord that he should be watched closely for a while.”

“T-This...”

The first quest he received in a year, only for him to fail! Huroi was in hell. As he felt despair, a notification window flashed before him.

[The quest ‘For the Residents of Winston (A)’ has changed to ‘Wait (S)’.]

[Wait]

Difficulty: S

Having played into the hands of Rabbit, you have failed the commission to report the Winston lord and Mero Company’s evil deeds to Earl Steim. Fortunately, hope still remains.

Winston Castle’s dungeon is known to be impossible to escape from! In the dark, cold and unsanitary dungeon, you must somehow survive until the end. If you can endure the cold and hunger, the Apostle of Justice will surely come and rescue you

Quest Clear Conditions: Don’t log out for 50 hours in real time.

* This is an extremely dangerous quest. For the elderly and those with a weak health, please give up on this quest.

[Would you like to accept the quest?]

‘What type of quest is this?’

The unfamiliar information window that popped up caused Huroi to feel confused and tense.

‘I can’t log out for 50 hours in real time, not Satisfy’s time? What is this absurd condition?’

Huroi was confident of his physical strength in reality. Thanks to that, he could play

Satisfy for 20 hours in the capsule. But the limit was 20 hours.

This was because the capsule's safety system didn't allow access for more than 20 hours. After connecting to Satisfy for 20 hours, the users would be forced to log out and they couldn't connect again for six hours.

In other words, the S.A Group that manufactured and distributed Satisfy's capsules strongly warned of the danger of connecting to Satisfy for more than 20 hours. Yet there was a quest to stay connected for 50 hours? It was also one where he was stuck in a dungeon, waiting.

'50 hours in reality is equal to 8 days and 8 hours in Satisfy. Will my spirit be able to endure staying in prison for that whole time without doing anything?'

This really was a dangerous quest. It was a quest where he might go crazy without being mentally prepared. But it was also an opportunity.

'This was an A-grade hidden quest. It is upgraded to an S-grade quest. This is an opportunity that I absolutely can't miss.'

Huroi decided to accept the quest. But before that, he decided to think about it. Did he have any unavoidable schedule in reality? No. He had no schedules recently. Did he have any family who would be concerned and forcefully shut down the capsule? No. He was single right now.

Was the front door locked? He had stayed home for four days without going anywhere. In the meantime, his front door had been firmly locked. When was the last time he went to the toilet and ate? Three hours ago. In any case, if he converted the capsule to the sleep state, his body would be able to endure for three days without eating or drinking.

Did he have a history of problems when connecting to the capsule for a long time? No. His health was second to none.

'Okay, my body is at its peak physical health. I shall challenge it once. The S.A Group made this quest, so they won't let the user die.'

Huroi made a firm decision to accept the quest.

"I won't give up the quest."

[This is the last warning. Are you really sure you want to proceed with the quest?]

“Yes.”

[The quest has been accepted.]

[Wait]

Difficulty: S

Having played into the hands of Rabbit, you have failed the commission to report the Winston lord and Mero Company's evil deeds to Earl Steim. Fortunately, hope still remains.

Winston Castle's dungeon is known to be impossible to escape from! In the dark, cold and unsanitary dungeon, you must somehow survive until the end. If you can endure the cold and hunger, the Apostle of Justice will surely come and rescue you.

Quest Clear Conditions: Don't log out for 50 hours in real time.

* This is an extremely dangerous quest. For the elderly and those with a weak health, please give up on this quest.

* From the moment you accept the quest, the system will thoroughly manage and supervise your brain waves and health status in real time. If a critical level of anomalies is detected, the system will force you to log out.

* If you are forcibly logged out, the S.A. Group will send executives and medical staff to your home to prepare for the worst.

* Even if you complete the quest and log out successfully, the S.A. Group will send executives and medical staff to visit you and check your status.

* You need to endure 200 hours of Satisfy time to complete the quest. In the worst case, because you are connected to virtual reality for a long time, you can confuse reality with virtual reality. Please don't let go of your tension until the last moment and show a strong mentality.

Quest Clear Reward: A second class called 'Apostle of Justice's Partner.' Title 'One who Overcomes Hardships.'

*Apostle of Justice's Partner: The 'Courage' stat will be opened. If you are with the Apostle of Justice, all stats will increase by 20%. The skill 'Unbreakable Justice' will be generated. The skill 'Sacrifice for Justice' will be generated.

* One who Overcomes Hardships: The 'Indomitable' stat will be opened. The skill 'Strong Will' will be generated.

Quest Failure: There is no penalty.

[From now on, the capsule will switch to sleep mode.]

[It is impossible to shut off the power of the capsule from the outside.]

[If there are any external shocks or attempts to shut off the capsule, an employee of S.A. will be sent to your residence to protect the capsule.]

[We applaud your challenge. Good luck.]

"It feels like I'm a VIP customer."

That was the impression Huroi got after checking the emerging information windows.

'Don't worry anymore. My spirit can endure for 200 hours.'

Huroi's remaining worries were completely dispelled because he trusted the thorough management and supervision of the S.A. Group. He firmed up his heart.

'I'll be waiting. Apostle of Justice. If he saves me and helps me clear the quest, I will be loyal to him, even if he is an NPC.'

Huroi pledged to meet with the unknown Apostle of Justice as he was imprisoned in Winston Castle's dungeon.

CHAPTER 34

11:33 p.m.

Lim Cheolho, the head of Satisfy's development team and of the S.A. Group, was working all night. Satisfy was a game with over two billion users, so there were always countless variables. Satisfy's overall flow, whether small or large, depended on what each of the two billion users were doing. The system was impossible to maintain if errors kept occurring.

Lim Cheolho was always enthusiastic about building a complete system.

'I can't allow even a single error.'

He had unmatched concentration whenever he focused on his work and only heard his ringtone after 40 seconds or more. It was a call from the operations team.

"What's going on?"

(Quest B408 has been triggered. Please authorize the convening of an emergency meeting).

Lim Cheolho's mind revolved and then recalled the information about B408.

B408. It was a codename for S-grade hidden quests that needed special conditions to be fulfilled.

'The compensation for Quest B408 is a second class?'

The user who cleared B408 would be able to obtain another class. In Satisfy, they might be the first user to have two classes. But the more rewarding the quest was, the more difficult it would be.

In particular, the content of Quest B408 was very unique, as the user had to be trapped in an enclosed space for 200 hours of Satisfy time. It had a direct impact on the real world, since the user who performed the quest was at a great risk of suffering serious psychological damage. One of the reasons why the clause 'the S.A Group has permission to view user's personal information' was created was due to quests like

B408.

“I give permission. I will go as well.”

Lim Cheolho immediately stopped working and headed towards the conference room. He arrived in the meeting room and looked at the documents. It contained information about the user who triggered the quest.

“Amazing. A Mongolian person.”

Originally, Mongolia was the world’s 10th richest country when it came to resources but lacked the technology to find and use those resources. But after breaking away from communism, the Mongolian government established diplomatic ties with many countries and actively attracted foreign direct investment (FDI).

Since then, numerous governments and companies advanced into Mongolia, including both the Korean government and Korean companies. They called Mongolia the ‘land of opportunity’ and made investments. There was a huge inflow of foreign capital into Mongolia.

However, once Mongolia’s regime changed in the 2010s, the FDIs started to slow down due to the rapid change in policy. After many years, the regime changed once again and the Mongolian officials tried to induce the FDIs again, but many had already lost confidence in Mongolia. In the end, the Mongolian government’s plans didn’t proceed as planned and Mongolia remained a developing country until the 2030s.

But now it was different. Mongolia’s FDIs were revitalized as the world’s economy boomed, thanks to rapid technological development in the 2040s. The Mongolian government cooperated, and through some successful processes, the nation stepped into the ranks of the developed countries.

But despite this, the nomadic temperament of Mongolia didn’t change. The vast majority of the Mongol people couldn’t adapt to the new benefits and still wanted to wander the grasslands. As a result, Mongolia became one of the countries with the smallest number of Satisfy members.

According to statistics, more than 60% of the total population of developed countries were Satisfy players. In addition, Satisfy-related businesses created a lot of jobs. But in Mongolia, only 3% of the population played Satisfy. For the Mongols who loved wandering the grasslands, the act of being trapped in a small capsule was

unacceptable.

‘3% of the population is a miracle.’

The 25-year-old with the name of Allunbatar, which was hard to pronounce, was a level 127 orator. Lim Cheolho was already surprised to see a level 127 orator, a class that was weak in combat, but he couldn’t believe that the user was a Mongolian.

‘Quest-based leveling: by utilizing the characteristics of an orator, he could obtain relatively difficult quests, an effective way to play.’

As Lim Cheolho read the documents, the executives who had been sleeping at home rushed in for the emergency meeting. Some of them gave off the scent of alcohol. Lim Cheolho paid attention to Yoon Sangmin. Director Yoon Sangmin was obsessive about cleanliness, so this was the first time Lim Cheolho saw him with scruffy hair.

“I thought you of all people would comb your hair, even in the midst of a war. Is Director Yoon’s weakness sleeping?”

The other board members had the same thought and laughed.

“We finally found Director Yoon’s weakness!”

“Haha, that’s right. I was suspicious that you might’ve been a robot that wouldn’t bleed from its wounds. Fortunately, you are human.”

The atmosphere lightened those few words from Lim Cheolho. The laughing executives completely woke up from their sleepy or tipsy state.

‘You made me a scapegoat.’

Yoon Sangmin’s face reddened as he beckoned to Yoon Nahee.

“It seems like all the executives are gathered. Have the Mongol branch president and officers come together?”

“Yes. I will connect to them immediately.”

A 3D image appeared in the center of the huge roundtable. It was the appearance of the branch managers and executives of the S.A. Group’s Mongolian branch. They

greeted Lim Cheolho.

Lim Cheolho proceeded with the meeting.

“The agenda of this meeting is to secure the safety of the Mongolian user who triggered Quest B408, called Allunbatar. I will entrust this to Branch Manager Park.”

S.A Group’s Mongolian branch manager, Park Eunhyuk, had already completed the preparations as soon as he heard that the Quest B408 was triggered by a Mongolian user.

“I’ve tracked the IP address of Allunbatar, who is connected to Satisfy, and have confirmed that the address in the member information matches his current residence. If a situation occurs, the Mongolian government will cooperate by dispatching medical personnel and police officers. Finally, during the quest, the security team members will observe Allunbatar in real time.”

Quick and efficient actions. Lim Cheolho nodded with satisfaction.

The branch manager, Park Eunhyuk, gave his opinion,

“The Mongolian branch sees this quest as an opportunity and aims to use it as a foothold into the market here. I will leak some of the quest information to the media. This will be the first user who might have two classes in Satisfy, and the fact that it is a Mongolian user will be widely reported throughout the media around the world. This is natural PR, and the Mongolians will see one of their own becoming a global star through Satisfy, increasing their interest in the game.”

“Oh, that is a good idea. Once they have interest, the number of people who want to experience Satisfy will increase.”

“The major media companies in each country, especially the Mongolian media companies, will definitely jump on the news. If the press builds Allunbatar into a huge person, the Mongolian pride will be triggered and the PR effect will be maximized.”

Most of the executives were favorable towards this idea. However, a small number of them didn’t like it.

“Is there any guarantee that Allunbatar will succeed in the quest? What will happen if we make the whole world pay attention to this quest, only for it to fail?”

Yoon Sangmin, who just finished brushing his hair, shook his head.

“It doesn’t matter if the quest is successful or not. Even if it fails, the fact that he is the first user to acquire an S-grade hidden quest will make Allunbatar stand out. Still, it would be preferred if the quest were successful. Unless there is a problem with Allunbatar’s personality and he logs out, it should be a success. Team Leader Yoon Nahee, have you analyzed the chances of Allunbatar’s quest succeeding?”

“Yes.”

Once Yoon Nahee replied, her team members handed the executives a new piece of paper. The Mongolian branch executives also received the document through email. After a while, the executives read the contents of the paper and frowned.

“What is this? The probability of success is only 9%?”

Director Yoon Sangmin was shocked. “W-What is this?”

Yoon Sangmin couldn’t accept this response.

“Doesn’t Quest B408 involve being rescued by a hidden NPC? Allunbatar’s health condition is also very good. If we protect Allunbatar on the outside, it is unlikely for him to log out. If Allunbatar doesn’t log out, he will be rescued by the hidden NPC and will clear the quest. So why is the success rate so low? I’ve predicted at least an 80% success rate.”

“Well...” The moment that Yoon Nahee tried to explain.

“Kuhahahahaha!”

The silent Lim Cheolho suddenly burst out laughing? Everyone looked at Lim Cheolho in shock.

Tsk tsk tsk. Lim Cheolho clicked his tongue and stated, “Your nature is too frantic. Shouldn’t you read the document first before asking the question?”

“.....”

The executives read the document carefully at Lim Cheolho’s words and were shocked at its contents. Yoon Sangmin nervously crumbled up the piece of paper and muttered,

“Again... this person...”

The normal scenario for Quest B408 was like this:

A user with high reputation would build up affinity to the maximum with the Winston residents. In the process of building affinity, the user would learn about the wickedness of Winston’s lord and the Mero Company. At this time, the user would be assimilated with the Winston residents and sincerely resent the Mero Company and the lord. The residents of Winston would detect this and give the user a quest called ‘For the Residents of Winston’.

Once the user accepted the quest, the story would begin in earnest. The user would try to meet Earl Steim, but they couldn’t go against the powers of Winston’s lord and the Mero Company. The user would be caught and eventually imprisoned in the dungeon.

At this point, the quest would change from ‘For the Residents of Winston’ to ‘Wait’. If the user were to accept this quest, the ‘Mysterious Apostle of Justice’ NPC, who would be hiding in Winston due to special circumstances, would rescue the user after 200 hours.

In this case, the user would establish a relationship with the ‘Mysterious Apostle of Justice’ and find out their identity. Then the user would go on a journey to help the mysterious NPC. Once the user performed all the linked quests, they would receive rewards beyond imagination.

However, a variable meant that the quest didn’t flow along the scheduled scenario. The variable was that Allunbatar shared the quest information with another user. The planned ‘Mysterious Apostle of Justice’ NPC became obsolete, and the related quests to the NPC also disappeared.

The news that Allunbatar was confined in the dungeon after failing the quest would be passed onto the user whom he shared the quest information with, not the ‘Mysterious Apostle of Justice’. But that user turned out to be...

“Grid...”

Exactly 12 days ago, the Korean user who obtained a legendary class by chance. Right, it was Shin Youngwoo.

CHAPTER 35

“He has a legendary class, yet he’s only level 21? How can he play the game like this? Amazing. His ability to not level up is truly amazing. It’s a wonder that he gained the class quest.”

Yoon Sangmin didn’t like Shin Youngwoo. Shin Youngwoo’s game history confirmed that he was a young man with no talent at playing the game. Taking the legendary class, wasn’t it like a swine obtaining a pearl? Yoon Sangmin thought it was a waste of a legendary class.

‘He is a person who will never become a ranker in his entire life. Thanks to his interruption, a large amount of content regarding the legendary class is consumed. Now he’s about to consume another large game content...’

Director Yoon Sangmin was sure of it.

‘Poison. This person is a deadly poison to Satisfy. Before he does more harm, we have to stop his account forever.’

But Director Yoon Sangmin didn’t have the authority to manage user accounts. He had no choice but to keep his thoughts to himself. Yoon Sangmin inwardly cursed Shin Youngwoo, then he asked Yoon Nahee with a serious face.

“By the way, why does the quest only have a 9% chance of succeeding? There is a 9% chance of this person rescuing Allunbatar? Nonsense. Isn’t it more likely to be a 0% chance?”

The other executives agreed.

“This figure is obviously wrong.”

“That’s right. I’m sure that the supercomputer Morpheus is infected with a virus.”

This quest was a failure. There was no way that a level 21 user could rescue Allunbatar. The aggressive publicity campaign was finished. Everyone thought so and was sad.

But in the midst of this, only Lim Cheolho was happy.

‘The protagonist of three big events in succession... Since becoming a legendary class, he made epic rated arrows and received the class quest, so I am somehow feeling expectant towards this young man.’

To put it bluntly, it was an incompetence so beyond common sense that it was difficult to predict. Shin Youngwoo was fun to watch because he caused many variables.

Lim Cheolho was happy, regardless of the quest results. The other executives, including Park Eunhyuk and Yoon Sangmin, were upset.



I met Khan earlier than Huroi. I protected Khan’s smithy and paid for his medical treatment. I was a great benefactor to Khan.

On the other hand, who was Huroi? He only spoke a few words to Khan.

“Then why?”

Why did Khan give him the huge ‘For the Residents of Winston’ quest? Meanwhile, I received a quest that would only give me 600 gold.

‘Isn’t it normal to give me all the quests?’

If Khan was an NPC who knew how to repay favours, he would’ve passed all his quests to me. But he was an ungrateful NPC.

“Khan should repay the favor.. No, is he crazy? Anyway, I need to think about the contents of the story. If I want NPCs to listen to me, do I have to act better in the future?”

The more I thought about it, the worse I felt. ‘For the Residents of Winston’ was a massive quest that would control Winston’s fate. It was natural for Khan to give it to the person he trusted most.

But his choice was Huroi! It meant I was worse than someone Khan had never met before!

“Why is a dog who rolled out from nowhere more credible than me...? Ugh!”

I was at a street stall near my house. I lamented about my life while pouring a shot of bitter shochu into my mouth. (Shochu is a Japanese alcoholic drink.)

My limit was originally one and a half bottles of shochu, but I was so disappointed in Khan and jealous of the jerk that I drank too much.

“Kuaaah~!”

I emptied my third bottle of shochu. My heart still wasn’t soothed and I felt like crying.

The more I thought about it, the more hateful Khan was. I truly believed that we had become sincere friends during the time I spent with him, but Khan thought differently. Khan didn’t believe in me.

“Why didn’t he trust me, giving a good quest to that other guy instead? Why...why? Damnnn!”

Anyway, tomorrow it would start raining for three days. I didn’t need to worry about going to work during that time.

I called out for the stall owner in a loud voice.

“Ajumma.”

The middle-aged woman cutting the soondae was surprised by my call and flinched. I was able to notice that the woman’s eyes shook slightly as she met my gaze.

‘...Is my charm maximized by the lonely aura that I am emitting?’

The loneliness in my eyes was like a blizzard on Mount Everest. Looking at those quivering eyes, the middle-aged woman seemed to be confused about being attracted to a young man around her son’s age.

‘I am such a sinful man...’

I felt sorry to the middle-aged woman, but I had no interest in her. Especially if the other person was a married woman.

‘I can’t break apart a family.’

I cut to the chase so that the woman wouldn't have any expectations.

"One more bottle of shochu. Can I also get a refill of the fish soup? Don't forget to put a piece of radish in the fish soup as a service..."

Kwaang!

The middle-aged woman plugged the knives she was holding into the chopping block. Then she pointed at me and shouted.

"You are really too much! I don't care about the three bottles of shochu, but I already said that I won't refill the fish soup after the 9th time! Furthermore, you ask for a service every time! The total value is more than the alcohol you're drinking. How can a young man have no shame?"

"...You are very inhospitable. At the very least, you should serve your customers fish soup... This world is once again causing me great disappointment. Yes, just like Khan."

"What are you saying? I can't afford to give you any more free refills!"

The owner was stubborn. My plan to fill my stomach with fish soup was in vain.

"It is time to say goodbye and return to cruel reality..."

I gave up asking for more refills and stood up. I placed the money for the drinks on the table, said goodbye to the owner and left the stall. As I walked on in a lonely mood, an angry voice was heard from behind me.

"Hey, Young Man! You are lacking 1,000 won! Give me 1,000 won!"

Ah, I counted the money wrongly due to being drunk. Then let's try.

'This is a chance to save 1,000 won!'

In the past, I never felt like saving money. But now I was debt-ridden, so the spirit of saving was unavoidable. As the number of conservative young people grew, the future of South Korea would become brighter. For the sake of my spirit of saving and Korea's future, I needed to avoid paying this 1,000 won.

'...No, no matter how drunk I am, I can't run away. I was caught on security camera and

will probably be brought to the police station.'

Wouldn't it be shameful to be placed behind bars over 1,000 won? I turned around and handed a 1,000 won bill to the middle-aged woman.

"If I was a common person of this modern society, I would've run away without paying this 1,000 won. But I returned to pay the 1,000 won. Isn't it wonderful?"

"...Don't most people act like this?"

"That...you aren't aware of the world. Do you know how many immoral people there are these days? People like me are rare!"

"R-Really? I understand. I understand already, so you should go home. You are drunk."

"Uhuh! Ajumma! Do you know how bleak my heart is? You should pack some fish soup for a young man who is nice enough to pay the 1,000 won in this chilly weather."

"..."

The middle-aged woman returned to her stall without saying anything else. I waited for her to come out again with fish soup, but she didn't return after 5, then 10 minutes.

"Haha... Once again, I have been betrayed. Both NPCs and people betray my faith!"

Yes, this was a bitter world. I went back home while realizing that I was alone in this world.



"You should contact me if you are returning late! Do you know what time it is now?"

It was one in the morning. As soon as I returned home, I was disturbed by Sehee who was watching TV in the living room.

"Have you been drinking until now? Oppa doesn't have a girlfriend or friends. Then why? Don't tell me you were drinking alone? Aren't you embarrassed?"

"...Hey, you have school tomorrow, so why aren't you asleep yet?"

“I was worried when a person who only spends time at work or in his capsule suddenly disappears... No, it is strange!”

“Eh? Are you concerned about me? So you waited up to this time?”

“What? Who was waiting? I-I was just watching a fun TV program and couldn’t go sleep.”

“Then why are you so mad? Your face is red as well. What did I do wrong?”

“W-whose face is red? That is ridiculous. I’m going to sleep now!”

Kwang!

Sehee turned and entered her room.

“Phew, teenage girls are really difficult.”

Sehee’s loud voice had broken my drunken haze. I once again became mad about missing out on the ‘For the Residents of Winston’ quest.

“Damn, I’m going to sleep quickly.”

Then Sehee left her room again. She approached me and started nagging. “You should brush your teeth and scrub your feet. You are drunk, so don’t take a shower. Well, I never expected you to take a shower because you’re not the type to shower every day.”

“...Aren’t you sleeping?”

“I am going to drink some water before sleeping.”

“Then go and drink water. Good night.”

Sehee headed towards the kitchen while I went into the bathroom.

“I’m not a child who needs to brush their teeth more than once a day.”

In rare cases, I did it three times a day. I stopped trying to place toothpaste on my toothbrush. I drank so much that my eyes kept closing.

“I won’t die if I don’t brush for a day...”

In the end, I just washed my hands and left the bathroom. Then I went straight to my room. Sehee sounded like she was screaming outside my room, but I didn’t worry about it and went to sleep.

The day was over.

CHAPTER 36

As soon as I opened my eyes the next morning, I connected to Satisfy and headed into the smithy. Khan was waiting for me and I immediately complained to him.

“Why did you leave such a task to a stranger like Huroi? Am I worse than him? Huh? You should’ve left it to me!”

Khan looked like he didn’t know what I was talking about, before making a belated expression of understanding. “Are you talking about the mission to tell Earl Steim about Winston?”

“Yes!”

Huhu, Khan gave a hearty laugh and explained.

“You are definitely a great young man. Despite your young age, you have great abilities and a sense of justice and sacrifice...”

“Huh?”

What was he saying?

“Aren’t you willing to take a big risk for the residents of Winston that you have no ties with?”

“Eh? That wasn’t what I intended...”

“You don’t have to say anything. You are too modest.”

“.....”

Khan misjudged me and turned me into an incredibly good guy! I had nothing to say, then Khan placed a hand on my shoulder.

“I know that you are worried for Winston’s residents, but how can I put you at risk? You are already precious to me, just like a son. I can’t ask you to do something so dangerous.”

Khan's eyes were warm.

"The Mero Company knows that you are close to me, so there will be a thorough surveillance. The Mero Company won't stay still if they see you make any movements to leave Winston. I won't be able to stand the grief if you get hurt by them."

Khan sincerely cherished me. My heart thumped. I felt bad for misunderstanding Khan.

"Khan... I didn't know your heart and thought you didn't trust me."

"How can that be? I trust you more than anyone else. Isn't that why I'm leaving the fate of the smithy to you?"

I listened to him. I had no reason to doubt Khan in the first place. I felt ashamed while Khan spoke in a spirited tone, "You have to focus on the game! Show the Mero Company!"

"The date is decided?"

"That's right. It is in two days. We have to hone your skills! Let's surprise everyone by polishing the legendary blacksmith skills that you have inherited!"

Okay! My motivation shot upwards.

"I understand. I will win the game!"

"Good spirit! I might not have the techniques but the experience I've accumulated in my life will be a great help to you! I will do my best to help!"

From that day on, Khan and I raised my training. I repeated the production techniques, causing my skills to become more proficient and polished. I thoroughly learned about efficient movements and reduced any unnecessary movements.

My probability of making rare and epic items increased slightly.

[A rare rated item was produced, so all stats have permanently risen by +2 and reputation throughout the continent has risen by +30.]

[An epic rated item was produced, so all stats have permanently risen by +4 and reputation throughout the continent has risen by +80.

[Your persistence has risen.]

[Your dexterity has risen.]

It was also fun to raise my persistence and dexterity stats. But there was one drawback. It was the limitation in the materials.

Khan was totally broke and I was saving money, so I couldn't obtain premium production materials. I only used the materials piled up in Khan's warehouse, but most of the materials were inferior. Khan couldn't get good ingredients because he was impeded by the Mero Company. Therefore, I couldn't produce high-performance items.

The higher the level and performance of the items produced, the faster the experience of my production skill would rise. Items with a low-level limit and low performance, even if they had a rare rating, meant my experience gain rate was slow and the value was cheap.

'Rare items should be sold to the stores, but I can sell the epic rated items to the users.'

[Usable Iron Sword]

Rating: Epic

Durability: 19/19 Attack Power: 35~40 Attack Speed: +2%

A sword made by a craftsman with great skill and potential but lacking in experience and reputation.

It is easy to use because it has a perfect balance of length and weight. The user can attack a little faster.

The fact that this type of sword was made with meager materials is amazing.

User Restriction: Level 12 or higher. More than 30 strength. Beginner Sword Mastery.

[Unexpectedly Comfortable Rat Leather Armor]

Rating: Epic

Durability: 24/24 Defense: 22 Movement Speed: +3%

An armor made of rat leather by a craftsman with great skills and potential, but lacks experience and reputation.

It is designed and created so that the wearer won't be inconvenienced when moving. The wearer can move a little faster.

The fact that this type of armor was made with meager materials is amazing.

User Restriction: Level 13 or higher. Beginner Leather Armor Mastery.

“The names are crude but...”

Level 12 or 13 users would find hunting much easier if they wore this armor and weapon. They were items that low-level users could possess if they had enough gold.

[Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill] Lv 1 (12.7%)

[Legendary Blacksmith's Breath] Lv 1 (8.9%)

‘When I made the Jaffa Arrow before, my experience increased by 3.7% and 2%. Instantly.’

Certainly, I was disappointed that the experience of my production skills was slowly rising. But I didn't care much. Regardless, my skills experience and production experience were rising, so I was satisfied.

I wasn't mistaken.

‘The Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill is still only level 1, but I am now able to craft more items than I could before.’

My production speed and degree of completeness have improved. If the skill level of the Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill and my dexterity stat rose, my production ability would become even better.

'But realistically, it is impossible to raise the skill level of the Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill anytime soon. Right now, the best thing I can do is to raise my dexterity stat.'

The higher my dexterity, the higher the completeness of the item. I decided to invest my stat points into dexterity for a more solid victory.

"Status window."

Name: Grid

Level: 21 (5,350/16,700)

Class: Pagma's Descendant

- * The probability of adding additional options when making items will increase.
- * The probably of item enhancement will increase.
- * All equipment items can be worn unconditionally. However, there is a penalty depending on the rating of the item.

Title: One who Became a Legend

- * Abnormal conditions don't work well on you.
- * You won't die when health is at the minimum.
- * Easily acknowledged.

Health: 936/936 Mana: 177/177

Strength: 104 Stamina: 52 Agility: 96 Intelligence: 59

Dexterity: 99 Persistence: 60

Composure: 44 Indomitable: 50 Dignity: 44 Insight: 44

Stat Points: 130

Weight: 842/3,080

Thanks to the steady production of rare and epic items, my stats have risen dramatically. I had a huge 130 stat points. I contemplated on how to invest the stat points.

‘If I invest all my stat points in dexterity, will my production skill rise significantly? Obviously, there would be a huge effect. But if I concentrate too much on only one stat, I will regret it later.’

I had to think carefully.

‘I put a lot of points into strength and agility the other day, so I don’t have to raise them anymore. I am currently lacking stamina, so wouldn’t it be nice to raise it? When dealing with strong enemies like the gangsters, it is better to have high vitality and defense.’

I decided to start distributing my stat points.

[You have invested 60 points in stamina. Is this correct?]

“Yes.”

[Once the points are invested, it can’t be reversed. Do you want to proceed?]

“Yes.”

[You have invested 70 points in dexterity. Is this correct?]

“Okay.”

[Once the points are invested, it can't be reversed. Do you want to proceed?]

“Stop asking me and just do it. Status window!”

Name: Grid

Level: 21 (5,350/16,700)

Class: Pagma's Descendant

- * The probability of adding additional options when making items will increase.
- * The probably of item enhancement will increase.
- * All equipment items can be worn unconditionally. However, there is a penalty depending on the rating of the item.

Title: One who Became a Legend

- * Abnormal conditions don't work well on you.
- * You won't die when health is at the minimum.
- * Easily acknowledged.

Health: 1,536/1,536 Mana: 177/177

Strength: 104 Stamina: 112 Agility: 96 Intelligence: 59

Dexterity: 169 Persistence: 60

Composure: 44 Indomitable: 50 Dignity: 44 Insight: 44

Stat Points: 0

Weight: 842/3,080

“Kukukuk!”

I shook with joy. Anybody would be shocked if they could see my status window. How

could a level 21 character have such stats? If I simply calculated the sum of all my stats, I was already beyond level 75.

Strength, stamina, agility, and intelligence. If I only calculated these basic stats, it was close to level 40!

‘Now that I see it, isn’t a production class great for stats?’

The benefit of raising all stats every time a higher grade item was made was common to all production-related classes, not just blacksmiths. Those who took advantage of this could overcome the disadvantage of production based jobs. Their insufficient combat skills could be supplemented with high stats. Of course, a large amount of labor was needed!

“I accept that labor is my life. My body is meant for labor! I will show you the power of labor.”

I swallowed bread and immersed myself in item production again. I didn’t lose any concentration until the day of the competition. As my character grew, I felt the same mental growth.

[A rare rated item was produced, so all stats have permanently risen by +2 and reputation throughout the continent has risen by +30.]

“Kuhahahahaha!”

I felt a pleasure that had never been felt when hunting and doing quests as a warrior.

“W-What...? Am I dreaming right now? You, how have you improved your skills in such a short time?”

Khan was shocked. I couldn’t reply that ‘my rapid growth is from raising my dexterity stat’ so I just said,

“I’m not your average genius.”

Khan was thrilled.

“Yes, yes! I forgot that you are Pagma’s Descendant. Huhu, I have a relationship with a legend who was born again. I will have no regrets after dying. Good! Shall I try harder?”

In reality, it was raining continuously. So I always connected to Satisfy except when it was time to sleep. Thus, my growth was steady until the day of the competition.



Currently, there were three epic classes in Satisfy. But except for the most recently appeared ‘Blood Warrior,’ there were no details about the others. The identity of the first epic class user was unknown, while the second one was said to be obtained by Agnus, 7th in the unified rankings.

The Satisfy users wondered about the identity of the two classes there were being kept strictly confidential. The related forums and broadcasters were engaged in a constant debate about the epic classes. But unless the relevant parties disclosed the information, it was only speculation.

What type of class were the other two epic classes? Were they as impressive as the Blood Warrior that Katz got his hands on? Perhaps even more than that?

The Eternal Kingdom. Akero Dungeon that was near Frontier, Earl Steim’s capital.

“There are too many monsters here. I barely managed to come all the way here.”

A beautiful blonde girl cried out. She looked like a fairytale princess, causing male users to approach her.

“Akero Dungeon is a place where even high-level users can’t hunt alone. Would you like to join our party? Our skills are very good.”

“No, you should join our party. We are very familiar with this dungeon and have acquired various know-hows. Our hunting speed is unmatched. You will definitely be satisfied if you join.”

“No! Come to our party! We will give you a lot of items!”

Satisfy’s character wasn’t perfect fiction. When a character was created, it actually reflected the user’s real appearance. Only the skin tone and additional features such as hairstyle, tattoos, scars, and height could be changed a little bit.

In other words, a beautiful person in Satisfy was generally beautiful in reality. That's why the men favored beautiful girls over anything else.

'A rare beauty!'

'My ideal type!'

Hearts burst from their eyes as they looked at the girl. They seemed accustomed to competing over girls.

"Do you really want me to join the party? If so, try to hunt the monsters in front of me. I want to join a strong party. I will judge if your skills are strong and then join the party that I want."

"What is this? She isn't that special."

"I agree. I would be thankful not to have a useless person join the party."

The female users talked badly about the girl. However, the male users became more attracted to the girl as their motivation shot up.

"Ohhhhhh! Be sure to keep that promise! Heat Wave! Fire Sword!"

"Beautiful girl. I will prove my strength. Swirling Frenzy!"

"Bah, idiots. Can you do this? Steel Skin! One Point Break!"

"Your skills don't back up your bragging. Thunderbolt!"

The male users ran towards the monsters and fired off their skills.

Kwarurung! Kung kwang! Kwajik!

Strong skills such as a swirling storm, thunderbolts and flames emerged, causing the walls of the dungeon to shake. Fearsome monsters saw the strange scene and ran away.

The blonde girl, who was the cause of the confusion, watched the skills being cast.

"That wind magic isn't lacking compared to other magicians in the kingdom. It was

indeed worthwhile to come here.'

She used her unusually high insight stat and Skill Observation to detect the Swirling Frenzy skill and whispered.

"Skill Duplication."

[You have successfully duplicated 'Swirling Frenzy' Lv.3.]

[The skill 'Swirling Frenzy' Lv. 3 is available to use once. You can keep it permanently until it is used.]

[Swirling Frenzy]

Lv. 3

Creates a vortex that deals 1,530~2,380 damage per second for five seconds. The agility of the target caught in the vortex will decrease by 80%.

Skill Mana Cost: 700

Skill Cooldown Time: 300 seconds

The blonde girl's name was Euphemina. Her class was Duplicator.

As a Duplicator, she used Skill Observation and Skill Duplication to instantly analyze and copy a skill used by the target. Whatever skill she copied, she could use it only once whenever she wanted.

There were disadvantages such as 'the usage frequency of Skill Duplication is limited to three times a day.' However, it was still a fraudulent skill despite the disadvantages.

'I can get Piaro with this.'

Euphemina left the men showing off their skills at the dungeon behind. Then she moved quickly and arrived at Kesan Canyon.

"I found it."

After finding a small cave at the end of the canyon, Euphemina read the contents of the quest once again in order to prepare her mind before entering.

CHAPTER 37

[Traitor of the Red Knights]

Difficulty: S

Pairo, a former colleague of Asmophel, has committed a terrible betrayal. Asmophel was wounded and vowed to take revenge on Pairo.

However, Asmophel has become seriously ill afterward.

In the end, Asmophel was forced to give up on his own revenge and asked you to get revenge for him.

Quest Clear Conditions: Defeat Pairo who is hiding in Kesan Canyon.

Quest Clear Reward: Title 'Agent of Revenge'

* Agent of Revenge: The 'Cruelty' stat will be opened. Attack Power +100. Skill 'Murderous Impulse' will be generated.

Quest Failure: Level -2. Asmophel's confidence will decline.

Euphemina, who was currently level 190, had one experience with clearing an S-grade quest once in the past. Therefore, she knew the terrible difficulty of an S-grade quest more than anyone else.

'Pairo... the strongest knight of the Saharan Empire.'

Asmophel had already explained how powerful Pairo was. His swordsmanship had reached the peak and when he used his ultimate technique 'Fated to Perish', death was inevitable. Euphemina couldn't overcome her tension and nervously gulped. She had taken 63 days to prepare for this quest, but she was still afraid.

"I believe it. I can do it. Skill window."

Euphemina basically only possessed nine skills. It was an unbelievably poor skill tree for a level 190 user. However, her skill window now had a total of 50 skills listed. In addition, they were all top class skills.

These were the skills that Euphemina prepared to clear the quest. She traveled all over the continent during the past 62 days, searching for top-ranked players. Then she duplicated their skills.

Only for today!

“Let’s begin.”

Euphemina cleared her mind and entered the cave. She was going to face Piaro, who was more powerful than a boss monster, alone. Pride? No it was proper confidence.

She was the first epic class in Satisfy. A fraudulent class that could duplicate other people’s skills, the Duplicator. This was the identity of the first epic class that appeared in Satisfy.

“Someone sent by Asmophel?”

A voice in the darkness was heard from the depths of the cave. Then a notification window popped up.

[The eternal hermit Piaro has appeared.]

[You are overwhelmed by Piaro’s killing intent and the fear effect has been applied.]

[The trap that Piaro installed is activated.]

Syu syu syu syu syuk!

Chachachachang!

From the land where Euphemina was standing, sharp spikes reminiscent of shark teeth rose and arrows flew from the walls on both sides. At the same time, Piaro appeared in front of them. Euphemina hastily used one of the skills that she had prepared.

“Tartan!”

Tartan was currently the strongest defensive skill known to be available only to 'Bump', the first ranked guardian knight.

Kuoooooh!

A huge steel giant appeared out of thin air and then embraced Euphemina's small, delicate body. All the arrows and spears didn't reach Euphemina's body as they were obstructed by the giant. But Piaro's flashy blow was enough to pierce the giant. Immediately before the sword was about to reach Euphemina's heart!

"Counter Barrier!"

The strongest assault knight, Miared's skill was reproduced by Euphemina.

Puok!

"Cough!"

As soon as Piaro's sword came into contact with Euphemina, Piaro coughed up blood and flew backward in the air. The damage that Euphemina should've received was reflected back on Piaro due to Counter Barrier.

"How dare you!"

The brilliant Piaro turned in the air, not caring about his wound. However, Euphemina didn't stay still.

"Swirling Frenzy!"

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Before Piaro could reach the ground, a fierce storm covered him. Piaro had no place to lean on, so his body couldn't resist being swept away by the storm. However, Euphemina was well aware that he wouldn't die. She didn't miss this opportunity.

"Scorching Heat Wave! Tyrant's Majesty! Mace of Light! Spear of Darkness! Prelude to Destruction!"

Euphemina had dozens of top-level skills that she had prepared for 63 days. The strong attacks of different properties shattered the cave, burying Piaro in the debris.

‘Have I succeeded? No. There would be a quest clear prompt.’

Euphemina’s intelligence stat was very high. She even prepared advanced mana potions. But nonetheless, she had a shortage of mana due to using so many top-level skills in succession.

‘I have to wait for the potion reuse time.’

Piario was still alive. She didn’t know when a strong counterattack would come from the pile of stones. Until then, she had to make up for her low mana. Euphemina decided to use ‘flying’ magic to maintain as much distance as possible from Piario.

As she rose into the sky, Piario crawled out from the remnants of the cave. He was relatively unscathed, despite the skill bombardment that would’ve killed an army of hundreds.

“Female... I recognize your strength and will do my best.”

Taack!

Piario jumped.

Peeng! Peeng!

Piario jumped into the air in bursts, as if he was stepping on an invisible staircase. He instantly narrowed the distance towards Euphemina.

“I’ll give you an inevitable death!”

A red light emerged from Piario’s sword. It was the forerunner to the skill that Asmophel mentioned, Fated to Perish. Once the skill was activated, Euphemina wouldn’t be able to avoid death. It meant that her 63 days of hardship would be for nothing.

Pahat!

The distance between Piario and Euphemina was so close that they could hear each other’s breathing. The reuse time for Euphemina’s potions was almost over. Euphemina drank a mana potion and used the spells she prepared to stop Fated to Perish.

“Nightmare Projection!”

“.....!”

The sword rushing towards Euphemina stopped. Euphemina gazed at Piaro and gulped.

Kwarurung!

The red sword, which should’ve sliced Euphemina, cut the empty space dozens of times. It showed he had properly fallen into a hallucination. Now Piaro was fighting against the most fearful nightmare in the world.

“You have come to me. Asmophellllll!”

The flaming sword continued to swing without stopping. Thanks to him, the sky was as red as the sunset. Euphemina tried to use a bombardment of skills again while Piaro was preoccupied.

But there was a variable.

[You have reached your physical and mental limits after using an excessive amount of force during a short period of time.]

[Your skills can’t be used for a while.]

[All stats have fallen by 50%.]

“W-What?! No way! My quest success was in sight!”

It seemed that she had used too many top-level skills in a short amount of time, causing her physical and mental stress. It was her first experience and she couldn’t deal with it because she never thought this could happen.

As she was confused, Piaro was slowly escaping from his hallucinatory state.

‘This can’t continue!’

The physical abilities of a Duplicator were minimal. Once her skills were blocked, she had no way to fight against Piaro. There was only one choice remaining. Give up the quest.

“Ugh...!”

Her 63 days of effort ended in vain. The quest had already failed and the situation would be worse if she died here. Euphemina swallowed back her tears and left this place. Shortly afterward, Piaro woke up from his hallucination and realized that Euphemina was gone.

“Wicked female... I will surely repay today’s disgrace.”

[Quest failed!]

[Your level has dropped by 2.]

[You are now level 188.]

[Asmophel’s confidence in you has fallen.]

Euphemina was frustrated at the notification windows that emerged after she barely escaped from Piaro. She tried her best for more than two months, but all her efforts returned such a horrible outcome, so her disappointment was undeniably huge.

“It was a chance to get a new title after a long time...”

The more titles, the better. It was because the effects overlapped. But gaining titles wasn’t easy. Most titles were obtained through quests, but quests which gave titles were rare. Despite being a top ranker, Euphemina only had two titles.

“Ohh.”

Euphemina couldn’t suppress her disappointment. As she was filled with anger, a messenger from the Mero Company came to her.

“Will you take a job? Miss Erina.”

Due to the nature of a Duplicator, Euphemina had multiple identities. Among them, Erina was the name she used when she copied an advanced NPC blacksmith and crafted an epic rated item.

‘Since they came with this name, is it a blacksmith related quest?’

Euphemina’s guess was correct.

[The quest ‘Item Production Game with the Mero Company!’ has been created.]

[Item Production Game!]

Difficulty: Unknown.

The world doesn’t know your true identity.

The Mero Company has approached you after hearing about your good blacksmith skills.

They want you to participate in an item making game held in Winston.

The opponent is the successor of the reputable blacksmith, Khan, who was once famous in the north. The successor is a variable who can’t be measured.

Quest Clear Conditions: Win the item production game.

Quest Clear Reward: 1,500 gold. Title ‘Competitor.’

* Competitor: Fighting spirit stat will be opened. Good luck stat will be opened. Skill ‘Rolling Dice’ will be generated.

Quest Failure: Your relationship with the Mero Company will become the worst.

[Would you like to accept the quest?]

‘A title giving quest!’

She had been frustrated at missing the chance to get a new title, only to receive a quest with a title reward. It was also a title that opened the good luck stat.

‘The good luck stat, I want to have it.’

The good luck stat was very famous. The higher the good luck, the higher the probability of receiving beneficial effects in Satisfy. It started with finding money on the road, to finding hidden quests and treasures.

As the name suggested, it gave good luck to the user so many people really wanted it. Naturally, this included Euphemina.

‘I also wonder what the Rolling Dice skill is. Doesn’t it sound interesting?’

The biggest disadvantage of being a Duplicator was that there were fewer types of skills available. Therefore, Euphemina had a huge desire to possess skills.

‘The reward is also 1,500 gold... should I accept?’

The rewards were excellent. For Euphemina, this quest was an inevitable temptation. She had just failed a quest, so she felt like earning some profits back with this quest. But she shouldn’t be in a hurry to accept the quest.

‘The difficulty is unknown...’

Euphemina made a hypothesis.

‘Khan’s successor must be a blacksmith character whose level isn’t open to the public. Is that why the difficulty isn’t determined?’

The hypothesis was plausible.

‘Well, I don’t have to worry too much. Does the difficulty of a production game matter in the first place?’

No blacksmith skills existed that Euphemina couldn’t duplicate. If she participated in the production game, she could copy the opponent’s blacksmith skill and play with the same skill level. In other words, it was a game where she would compete with luck.

When competing with the same skill level, the luckier person would create a higher rated item and victory would be decided accordingly.

‘If I am lucky, I can easily clear the quest. On the other hand, I might fail if I am unlucky.’

It was a quest where she couldn’t be certain of success. The risk was big. However, she

coveted the rewards. Euphemina decided to accept the quest.

“The game, please leave it to me.”

The game was established to be between Grid and Euphemina. If the world knew the identities of Grid and Euphemina, their competition would be the hottest issue in the world. A confrontation between an epic class and a legendary class, the attention would've been enormous.

Unfortunately, the world still didn't know the identities of the two people. Such a significant battle spread secretly.

CHAPTER 38

Winston's Central Square!

It was originally crowded, but even more people were gathered today. The item making game between blacksmiths would occur here.

"I hope that Grid can win and protect Khan's smithy. That smithy is the last pride that we have left."

"That's right. If the smithy falls into the hands of the Mero Company, our place in Winston will completely disappear."

"Grid, have strength! You absolutely can't lose."

The hearts of the Winston residents gathered together. They prayed that Grid would win the game. However, the users' attitudes were different. The result of the game had nothing to do with them.

"An item production game? There isn't anything else interesting, so why don't we watch for a while?"

"I don't have anything else to do. If it isn't fun, then we can just go. Somebody win~. The winner will be on this side~."

As a result, most users just thought of the game as slightly interesting.

"Hey, isn't it funny when you think about it? Blacksmiths making items, why are so many people going to watch it?"

"Yes. It's tedious to watch a blacksmith make items, not interesting. The item created will be epic at the most, so I'm not even interested in the result."

"Where is an epic rated item? It's good if they could even make a rare rated item. I heard rumors that no famous blacksmiths are participating."

"What? Then what is the goal? Why should we care about the results? Hey, this is a waste of time, so let's just go hunting. Anyway, who cares about who owns the smithy?"

The users mocked the game as trivial and turned away.

After a while.

Once the participants of the game were revealed, the male users no longer thought of leaving.

“Now! Let me introduce the main characters of this match. From the Mero Company, Erina! And Khan’s successor, Grid!”

“Ohhhhhhh!!”

The eyes of the male users widened as they saw the blonde girl climbing onto the stage and they started cheering.

“Wow. Really pretty!”

“Is this love at first sight?”

“My ideal type...”

The blonde girl was wearing a hat. However, she showed off a beauty that couldn’t be hidden, even with her face not completely exposed. Her mouth was especially attractive. The male users, who weren’t interested in the result of the game originally, became her avid supporters the moment they saw her.

“Erina. I will cheer for you.”

“Erina, please win~.”

“Erina! Erina! Erina!”

The male fan club formed in an instant. Erina, or Euphemina, shrugged as she watched their sky-piercing cheers and waved her hand gracefully.

“Thank you for your support.”

“Ohhhhhh!”

She smiled softly, making her seem like a goddess to the men. It was reminiscent of

the reaction of soldiers towards the visit of girl group idols.

Grid sucked in a deep breath at the sight.

‘Is it my turn next?’

The male users were rooting for the female contestant. Then it was natural for the female users to support and cheer on the male contestant. Grid smiled and followed Euphemina’s actions by waving towards the female users in the audience.

Grid expected the cheers of female users. But their reaction was much different than expected.

“What is that guy doing? Uhh, I feel bad.”

“The bread that I ate a while ago feels like it’s coming back up...”

“He looks really horrible...”

The reactions from the female users were the worst!

‘This dirty society that only cares about looks! You would support me properly if I was handsome.’

None of the women supported him, but the residents of Winston shouted towards the frustrated Grid.

“Grid! You have us. We are cheering for you. We believe in you! Be sure to win.”

“Khan’s successor, show off your skills.”

“Grid’s victory! Grid’s victory! Grid’s victory!”

Grid trembled.

‘If you are supporting me, why are your gazes directed towards her...?’

NPC males were wolves as well. Among the residents of Winston, the men forgot that the blonde girl was an enemy and couldn’t keep their eyes off her. Even Khan!

‘These bastards, I am now aware of your real state.’

A blonde girl who was so seductive that she even attracted elderly NPCs. Grid felt resentful towards her, as he turned into a squid just from standing next to her.

“You. I will surely win. Then I’ll enjoy seeing that pretty face distort!”

Euphemina was amazed by Grid’s declaration. This was a man she was meeting as an enemy, but how could he ignore her beauty?

‘Unless the person is gay or blind, isn’t it natural for all men to support my beauty?’

Euphemina had a proud nature.

‘Taste my beauty properly.’

Euphemina lifted the brim of the hat she used to hide her identity. Her beautiful face was clearly revealed. Grid was forced to admire it.

‘Looking at her like this, she is really pretty. Isn’t she comparable to that wicked witch, Yura?’

If Yura was an elegant and mature woman, Euphemina was a youthful and refreshing girl. Their atmosphere was quite different, but they were similar in that both of them had a transcendent beauty.

‘Is she a human or a doll?’

Grid made a stupid expression and was unable to keep his eyes off of Euphemina.

Euphemina saw it and thought. ‘Yes, that’s right. Once you see my face, you will fall at first sight. Now you will follow me like a dog, just like the other men.’

There was no man in the world who could go against her beauty! Euphemina had huge pride in her looks. She continued to speak to Grid in order to perfectly capture her victory.

“Grid? There is no need to be hostile towards me. Haven’t we just met? Perhaps we will see each other again. In the future, we might develop a good relationship? So don’t be upset and let’s get along.”

She had half moon eyes and a slyly flirting voice. There was no man who wouldn't be into her when she acted like this.

But Grid just snorted. "What? Develop a good relationship? Don't say such horrible things, Kid."

Euphemina's face turned red.

"H-Horrible? Why wouldn't you develop a good relationship with me? In addition, kid?"

"Yes! I don't want to develop a good relationship with a fox like you! Kid! Have you even graduated from high school? I have no interest in a little person like you. I'm not a lolicon! Shit. Do you think that I am such a slimy bastard? It might be your intention to keep me from concentrating on the game, but I won't fall for it."

Grid was firm. He had an ideal type. Her height should be at least 168cm and her chest should be a D cup! Euphemina was definitely pretty but she was far from Grid's ideal type. Her natural height was 160cm. Her chest was only a B cup.

No matter how good her face was, there was no reason for Grid to fall for her.

'Kid? Fox? What is with this person?'

Euphemina stared blankly as she listened to Grid's ridicule, before suddenly shaking. The sense of shame she never experienced before made her extremely angry.

'More than anything else, I am 20 years old!'

That's right. Euphemina wasn't a young girl. She looked younger than her age, but she was already an adult. Being called a kid was touching on Euphemina's sore spot, since she had a complex about her height.

'I will disgrace you in front of all these people!'

Euphemina decided as she was filled with anger. She smiled coldly. Then she glanced at Grid and asked.

"Since you don't realize my charm, are you gay? Okay. I will make you feel bitter about Mother Nature making you gay. Let's see who will make the better item. But I'm going

to win.”

“W-What? Gay? I am gay? What the hell are you saying? This unlucky brat! I’m not gay!” Grid shouted indignantly.

Euphemina heard another shock as she heard the word ‘unlucky.’ She never imagined the day would come when she would hear this from a man.

“U-Unlucky? Me? A trash-like man will never be able to match me!”

Grid was the one who insulted her first. From Euphemina’s point of view, Grid seemed like a madman. Euphemina couldn’t cope with the shame and tearfully shouted. “I want to say goodbye to you as quickly as possible! Start the game now!”

“Okay, let’s get started. I don’t care about this one-sided cheering. I will make you fail today!”

The host didn’t announce the start of the game but Grid already placed iron ore inside the burning furnace. Euphemina experienced making items in the past so she also started smelting the metal.

Hwaruruk!

A huge momentum rose from the two angry people. The temperature of the furnace rose rapidly.

The host shouted.

“The two people have started the game. I will notify the crowd! This time, the theme is to make a dagger. The one who produces the better quality dagger within the time limit will be the victor!”

Daggers were items that could be made relatively quickly. It was good to spend a long time to create a real masterpiece, but skilled blacksmiths could complete a good dagger in two hours. The time limit of this game was three hours.

“Erina, fight!”

The number of users continued to increase as they heard the turmoil, causing Euphemina’s fans to multiply as rapidly as a cancer cell. The cheers of the Winston

residents were completely buried by their shouts, so Grid seemed to be fighting alone behind enemy lines.

CHAPTER 39

One-sided cheering! But Grid actually became more excited. A weed would grow stronger once it was trampled on.

‘I will win! Then I will make all of you shut up!’

Grid completed the smelting and started the process of making the dagger.

Ttang! Ttang!

Euphemina became nervous as he started to tap the steel with his hammer. It was because she hadn’t finished smelting yet.

‘Fast! The difference in our skills is too large.’

It was inevitable. In the first place, was Euphemina a blacksmith?

‘I shouldn’t be hasty. It isn’t good to be too urgent.’

Euphemina calmly focused on the process of smelting. Grid had repeated the quenching and forging process several times by the time she finished smelting. Then she pulled out a hammer from her inventory. She had bought this hammer for a lot of money, in order for this quest to be successful.

[Blessed Blacksmith Hammer]

Rating: Epic

Durability: 299/300 Attack Power: 50~70 Odds of Making a Rare Rated Item: +15% Odds of Making an Epic Rated Item: +5%

A hammer user by a prestigious blacksmith. It will assist the user in creating higher rated items.

User Restriction: Level 150 or higher. More than 100 strength. Intermediate blacksmith skill.

[You can’t equip it because you don’t meet the item usage conditions.]

Euphemina had enough strength and her level was high enough to use the 'Blessed Blacksmith Hammer.' But she wasn't a blacksmith, so she didn't have the intermediate blacksmith skill. However, that story would change once she duplicated Grid's blacksmith skill.

Euphemina faced Grid who was concentrating on making a dagger and used Skill Observation. Euphemina smiled with satisfaction.

'If we both have the same blacksmith skill, it is likely that the person with a better production tool will win.'

The hammer Grid was using was old and shabby, much worse than Euphemina's hammer. Euphemina was confident of her victory. But the moment she thought that! She was shocked as she saw the notification window that popped up.

[The level of Skill Observation is too low.]

[You can't analyze the skill of the target.]

"W-What?"

Currently, Euphemina's Skill Observation was level 7. Her skill wouldn't fail, even if she observed a third advancement NPC. Above all, her skill was only level 5 when she analyzed and copied the skill of an advanced level blacksmith.

However, Grid's blacksmith skill was impossible to observe with the level 7 Skill Observation? Surely Grid's blacksmith skill wasn't at the advanced level?

"...It can't be. Skill Observation! Skill Observation!"

[The level of Skill Observation is too low.]

[You can't analyze the skill of the target.]

[The level of Skill Observation is too low.]

[You can't analyze the skill of the target.]

No matter how many times she used Skill Observation, the same notification windows repeatedly appeared.

"This must be a bug. Skill Observation!!"

[The level of Skill Observation is too low.]

[You can't analyze the skill of the target.]

She used the skill until her mana was low, but her face was pale as she failed to complete the analysis.

"Unbelievable..."

Euphemina had to admit it. This stupid man actually had the skills of an advanced blacksmith.

'Is he a craftsman? That absolutely can't be!'

The 1st ranked person on the blacksmith rankings was only at the intermediate level. Yet Grid, who she'd never heard of, had skills beyond a ranker. It was impossible. Craftsmen were rare even among NPC blacksmiths.

'Yes, he is a blacksmith, not a craftsman. But why would my skill fail to analyze if he is a blacksmith? D-Don't tell me?'

Euphemina made a hypothesis. Grid wasn't an ordinary blacksmith. She couldn't rule out the possibility that this stupid man might have a hidden class like herself.

'I don't want to believe it, but it is reasonable.' Otherwise, I can't explain why Skill Observation can't analyze this man's skill.'

In addition to blacksmiths, the rankings of all production classes were currently at the intermediate level. Even the most famous NPCs only had advanced level skills, and

craftsman NPCs were extremely rare.

If Grid was an ordinary user, it was impossible for him to master the craftsmanship skills. Euphemina was forced to believe that Grid wasn't an ordinary blacksmith. Rather, he had a blacksmith-related class above the epic rating.

'It isn't a rare class. I can replicate the skills of a rare class since I have an epic class. The minimum must be an epic class. But except for me, the only other epic classes are Agnus and Katz... Surely that guy doesn't have a unique class? When did a unique class emerge?'

It was really the worst case scenario. She had been thinking too lightly when she accepted a quest with an unknown level of difficulty.

'Completely outrageous. I never expected to compete with a unique class!'

Euphemina fell into a confused state.

'What should I do? I can't do anything like this and will fail the quest.'

She couldn't even start making an item because she didn't have the blacksmith skill. She knew how to make it, but the end result would be absolutely rubbish without the assistance of the blacksmith skills.

'Should I give up? Again?'

She faced a situation where she had to give up another quest after 'Agent of Revenge.' Euphemina thought this was truly the worst.

Grid belatedly discovered that she wasn't doing anything and mocked her. "What? Are you completely frozen? Are you jealous of my skills, Kid?"

"Ohh!"

Anger formed on Euphemina's face again.

'I can't be defeated by a lowly man like this!'

If things continued like this, Grid would win. She needed to find a blacksmith and duplicate their blacksmith skills.

‘But where can I find a blacksmith...? Ah!’

Euphemina had a good idea and suddenly glanced at the audience. Rabbit was aware of the strange turn of events and approached her.

“Is there a problem?”

Euphemina whispered into Rabbit’s ears.

“Who is Grid’s mentor? Call that person up on stage as well. Then make him help Grid with the dagger production.”

It was an absurd demand. Rabbit’s eyes narrowed. “Why? I can’t understand your intentions.”

Euphemina explained with an embarrassed expression.

“I can’t say anymore because it is a personal matter, but please listen to my request. It will increase my chances of winning.”

“Hrmm...”

It would increase her chances of winning? Rabbit wasn’t easily convinced. But what could he do? The game had already begun. There would be a lot of accusations if he tried to change the competition now.

‘In the first place, I have no substitute.’

In the end, Rabbit was forced to listen to Euphemina’s demands.

“I will try.”

Rabbit spoke to the host who yelled towards the audience.

“Mr. Khan! Come up on stage! Erina stated that she wants you to add your strength to Grid!”

“What?”

A truly shocking proclamation. Confusion appeared on Grid’s face as there was an

uproar.

“What? Erina wants to compete 2 against 1?”

“That guy called Grid must be very bad. Therefore, Erina felt pity and called Grid’s mentor to the stage.”

“Is she saying that they have to join forces for this to be a proper competition?”

“Wow, that is truly great confidence. She’s a wonderful woman.”

The crowd misunderstood and became more firmly entrenched on Euphemina’s side. She was worshipped as a benevolent and confident queen. On the other hand, Grid’s pride was dented and his hostility towards Euphemina became stronger.

‘This chick dares do this...!’

Khan walked over to the agitated Grid and said, “Calm down. This is a great opportunity for us. Let’s fight her together as she demanded.”

Grid puffed up. “What? Do you really think I will lose to her?”

“How can that be? I believe that you can win over anyone. Aren’t you Pagma’s Descendant?”

“Then why are you following her demands?”

“I respect you as a blacksmith. I would like to have the honor to work with you. In addition, my blacksmith’s heart wants to help instead of just watching. Grid, this is a request. I won’t hold you back, so please give me this opportunity to protect my smithy with you.”

Grid couldn’t refuse after hearing Khan’s words.

“...As long as we’re together, we will succeed. Let’s crush that girl in front of all these people.”

“Yes!”

The two people teamed up. In particular, Khan was overjoyed at being able to work

with Grid in front of so many people.

“I will demonstrate the best skills as your assistant! Give me a command.”

He was definitely a blacksmith. As Khan prepared to help Grid, Euphemina activated Skill Observation.

[You have successfully analyzed ‘Advanced Blacksmith’s Craftsmanship’ Lv.2.]

It was as planned. Euphemina smiled as an analysis of Khan’s blacksmith skill appeared.

“Skill Duplication!”

[You have successfully duplicated ‘Advanced Blacksmith’s Craftsmanship’ Lv.2.]

[The skill ‘Advanced Blacksmith’s Craftsmanship’ Lv. 2 is available to use once. You can keep it permanently until it is used.]

In the first place, the result of the blacksmith game depended on chance. Even if Grid had superior blacksmith skills, it didn’t mean he would unconditionally make a high rated item. In addition, Euphemina had the Blessed Blacksmith Hammer.

‘There is still a chance.’

Euphemina became engrossed in the production of the dagger.

CHAPTER 40

It had been two hours since the item production game started. It was around the time that the crowd was losing interest. While Euphemina had already finished the blade and had moved on to the hilt, I hadn't even finished the outline of the blade yet. I continued to temper the iron.

Ttang! Ttang!

Thanks to Khan helping me pinch the metal with his tongs, I was able to become more involved in the hammering and forging.

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Patience skill has been activated. Concentration, stamina, and defense will rise to the extremes for one hour.]

A notification window popped up as I was concentrating. At the same time, I was able to exert an aura of sharp concentrating, making my hammer strikes more powerful and elaborate.

Kaaang!

The sound of cheering was completely diminished. I forgot that this was Winston's Central Square that contained thousands of people. Even Khan's helping presence became blurred. It was quiet. The only thing that existed in this world was the iron.

Ttaang – ttang –

The hammer and I weren't separate entities. We were fully fused. There was no resistance in the movements of the hammer. It followed my will as if it was part of my body.

Ttaaang!

The metal made a clear sound as it was shaped like a blade. Then a notification window flashed.

[The Legendary Blacksmith's Breath has increased the effectiveness of your production items]

“.....!”

My spirit cleared and the calm world suddenly changed.

“Erina! Erina! Erina!”

“Khan, fighting!”

“I believe in Grid!”

The crowd cheered, the birds chirped on the fence, the second hand of the clock tower ticked, and the hammering of Erina were all types of noises that could be heard from the other side of the stage.

“Ah...”

My consciousness was dissatisfied as I returned from my own world. It was like reality was intruding.

‘I wanted to remain there a little bit longer.’

Too bad. It was the first time since the creation of the Jaffa Arrow that I became so immersed in the production process. If I could remain in that world a little more, I thought I could create a better work.

As I felt regret, Khan's trembling voice was heard.

“I never thought iron could be so beautiful...”

Now I had finished the blade. Then I saw it. It was flawlessly sophisticated, more beautiful than any artwork! The eyes of a legendary blacksmith shouted. This work was more outstanding than the Special Jaffa Arrows.

“G-Great... amazing! To think I am able to enjoy the glory of helping with this work! I

think that I was born to become a blacksmith just for this day!" Khan excitedly exclaimed.

But I remained calm. It was because I couldn't ruin the remaining processes.

"Inventory."

I took out a minotaur horn from my inventory. It was why I spent a huge amount of 10 gold before the match. I would make a sheath and hilt with this horn. The sheath could be used as a defensive tool depending on the situation, so it was better to have a proper weight and rigidity. The hilt had to be relatively soft to minimize the fatigue of the user.

The minotaur's horn was robust and durable, but it was surprisingly soft. It had the texture of brass casting. In other words, it was suitable to be used for the sheath and hilt.

Seuk seuk.

First, the sheath was designed based on the size of the blade while the length, width, and shape of the hilt were based on an adult male's hand. It was completely practical. The minotaur's horn had an artistic pattern on it, so they showed an artistry without me having to do anything. After finishing the design, I was focused on the production when I heard a tremendous cry from the stands.

Erina had completed the dagger one step ahead of me. The host checked her dagger and was impressed.

"This is a really great work! Making this in less than three hours, I can only admire this wonderful work! Now!"

"What type of work was created that could cause such surprise?"

"Don't look alone. Show it to us!"

The crowd was in an uproar as they were curious about the finished work. After the host confirmed that their curiosity reached the peak, he focused the crowd's attention on the display board installed at the back of the stage.

"Okay! Check it out!"

On the display board, Erina's dagger appeared. It was very sharp yet had a great balance. It was a superior dagger that would be able to exert an exceptional attack power. The handle was made of brass casting with a beautiful pattern engraved on it, making it a beautiful ornament as well.

"Ohhhh!"

"The dagger resembles the owner! I have never seen such a pretty dagger. I want to see!"

"That is a secondary matter. The performance is extraordinary just looking at it. I really want it."

The crowd was enthusiastic. Now it wasn't just the men showing a favorable opinion towards Erina, but the female users as well. The detailed information of the dagger appeared.

[Dagger of Bewitchment]

Rating: Epic

Durability: 60/60 Attack Power: 122~127 Attack Speed: +8%

* There is a certain probability of bewitching the enemy.

* The durability will be quickly consumed when blocking an attack.

A dagger produced using the delicate skills and superior aesthetics of an excellent blacksmith.

The lethal beauty can sometimes steal other people's hearts.

The sharp blade has a high attack power, but the drawback is that it lacks robustness.

User Restriction: Level 100 or higher. More than 200 agility. More than 30 strength. Intermediate Dagger Mastery.

The disadvantage was its durability, but this was a truly excellent dagger. The attack power was incomparable to a common dagger. It also had the bewitchment option.

Bewitchment was a powerful skill that turned a target into a non-resistant state for three seconds. It was appropriate as an assassin's weapon.

The users were convinced.

"The result is clear! Erina definitely won this game!"

Even the Winston residents felt desperate.

"Ah... that woman is a great blacksmith. Grid is a blacksmith recognized by Khan, but is it possible for him to create something better?"

Rabbit and the other Mero Company officials looked convinced that victory was in their grasp. But I didn't shake. Khan was the same.

Khan laughed. "That girl has tremendous skills for her young age. They are excited right now. But it won't be like that in the future. Isn't that right?"

The sheath and hilt were finished. I nodded as they were combined with the blade.

"Of course. I represent the ugly people of the world. I will never stop."

Khan frowned. "Represent the ugly people? What does that mean? You are fighting on behalf of the smithy, the smithy!"

"...Ah, excuse me. I forgot. Now, shall we go and keep the smithy?"

The dagger was completed. I was thrilled to see the information about the dagger and showed my dagger to the host. The host didn't even look at my dagger properly as he spoke to the crowd.

"This team spent a lot more time than Erina, despite having two people. He can't hide the fact that the result of this game is too obvious!"

"Hahaha! Yes! It is shameful for two men to go against a woman, but it has come to an end!"

The crowd agreed.

I scoffed at all of them. "Look at my work and be careful not to have heart attacks from

shock.”

At that moment. Soldiers armed with swords and spears climbed onto the stage. Then they confiscated my dagger.

“W-What?”

As I was confused, a heavily armed knight shouted.

“I have received information that you are working with a criminal called Huroi, arrested eight days ago for trying to harm Winston! You’ll have to be questioned about this!”

“Huroi?”

Was he talking about Huroi who received the ‘For the Residents of Winston’ quest? He was captured and failed the quest?

“That useless bastard. No... why am I associated with him?”

I resisted. “What are you saying? I don’t know that person! Let me go!”

The knight pulled out his sword at my defiance and warned me, “I suggest that you don’t resist.”

“Yes...”

If I did something, this bastard really would kill me. A sword was pointed at my neck! I was unarmed and forced to follow as the soldiers dragged me down the stage.

Khan called out. “What are you doing? Why are you unfairly framing a person?”

The knights and soldiers ignored Khan. Khan eventually ran to where the Mero officials were sitting. Then he shouted to someone.

“Valmont! You cowardly wretch! You know that you won’t win the game, so you are trying to finish it in this manner! You aren’t afraid of the Winston residents?”

However, Khan’s shouting was useless. The middle-aged man didn’t respond as if he was just hearing an annoying dog’s barks.

Thus, I was brought by the armed forces to the castle.



‘This is impossible!’

Rabbit had spent 20 years as a merchant. In the meantime, he had handled numerous excellent products. That’s why he was astonished the moment he checked the dagger made by Grid.

‘This isn’t an ordinary item! Erina’s dagger can’t be compared to it. We... we lost. I didn’t think he would have that much skill!’

Valmont, sitting beside him, muttered in an angry voice. “We lost.”

Valmont also noticed it right away when he saw Grid’s dagger. His eyes were as good as Rabbit’s when it came to seeing spectacular items.

Rabbit bowed. “I’m sorry. I should’ve been more vigilant.”

Valmont forgave him for failing this time. There was no choice. “It isn’t your fault. You hired an amazing blacksmith. But the opponent was too strong. It is different from his appearance.”

Valmont had declared their victory when he first saw Grid. He guessed Grid was just a lowly blacksmith. But the result was clear and simple. This failure couldn’t be blamed on Rabbit. Grid was just an amazing person.

“He disguised himself as a trash person so that he could make his opponent underestimate him... He really isn’t stupid. This competition needs to be properly handled. How can I accept this result?”

Valmont wanted the smithy. It wasn’t acceptable for a merchant to give up on the profit from the smithy because of a game.

Rabbit tried to persuade him. “But we have already publicly announced this. If we don’t accept the result, the public sentiment will be irreversible.”

Valmont raised his voice. “You are speaking nonsense. I will absolutely never give up the smithy!”

Rabbit could no longer stop Valmont. How could he be so confident in this bad situation? There must be something.

Then Valmont smiled wickedly. “In the first place, the crowd doesn’t know the result yet. Unlike us, they don’t have the discerning eye to see that it is a great item. Unless the details are checked, it is impossible to know that Grid’s dagger is far superior to Erina’s dagger. Sir Philipson!”

Philipson was the knight of Baron Lowe, the lord of Winston, and he was here as Valmont’s escort. It clearly showed how great Valmont’s current position in Winston was.

Valmont gave an order to Philipson. “Arrest him right away on charges of being the friend of Huroi, who was caught recently. You must confiscate the dagger that he made. This information of that dagger must not be disclosed to the public!”

“I understand.”

Then Philipson’s soldiers intruded on the stage. They quickly seized the dagger and arrested Grid.



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